THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY BASED VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTERS IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN NAKURU TOWN, KENYA

BY

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THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (MDS) OF ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY, KENYA

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DECLARATION

This Dissertation is a product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration. It has not been previously presented to any other institution. I agree that this dissertation may be available for reference and photocopying at the discretion of the University

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this paper to my family and their endless support for my endeavors.

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study was to understand the role of the Community vocational training centers in the wider socio-economic empowerment of women. The process depended on finding out the effects of skills training on social economic empowerment of women, examination of the impact of TVET on social economic empowerment of women and how these institutions contribute to the improvement of the performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women. The study was carried out in Nakuru Town East Sub-County. This area was selected because there are three polytechnics which source students from the larger Nakuru County and its environs. This study presented a unique look at the significance or failure of TVET in the empowerment of women. It also presented a new line of inquiry in the entire spectrum of women empowerment, especially when it comes to female participation in male dominated sectors like construction and electrical engineering. The study adopted an explanatory design. This way the detailed description comes before the final explanation. For this study, the target population was women who have received training at TVET institutions within Nakuru East town Sub-County over the past five years. The sample of this study comprised of 114 women selected from each of the TVET institutions located in Nakuru East Town Sub-County. The study primarily depended on questionnaires to get study data. The study found that when women attend vocational training, and they gain skills which provide them with access to employment opportunities. These employment opportunities give them access to their own funds. With that access to finance, coupled with agency and decision making they are able to improve their lives in the long term. The study will be used by counties and the national government in their initiatives aimed at empowering women. The authorities will be able to use the existing community vocational centers better and also find ways to establish new ones in a manner that will serve young women better.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TVET-Technical and vocational education and training

FGM-Female genital mutilation

ECD-Early Childhood Education

STEM-Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

SACCO-Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter will present the background information pertaining to the study. It shall state the statement of the problem, the objectives of the research, research questions, and justification along with the scope of the study.

1.1 Background

Education is one of the crucial factors when it comes to economic development. For nations to reach the desired level of sustainable economic development, they have to make a substantial investment in building human resource. Human capital, composed of people who are well trained and informed has positive outcomes both at the individual and societal level. Education has the capacity to increase productivity within the economy and sparks technological progress. It also matters in the process of attaining economic growth and providing some semblance of wealth distribution. Economists agree that when financial and human capital intertwine and remain in perfect equilibrium then a nation can grow in leaps and bounds.

The balance has to be maintained in order for growth to be sustained. Investments can be made but without qualified laborers it will not succeed. Majority of the world's leading economies are thriving due to qualified labor and a wide market for ready made goods. In the aftermath of the Second World War, countries invested and encouraged people to join the workforce for incentives and financial gain during the reconstruction effort. Countries like Japan and Germany inspired and equipped their human resource and coupled their efforts with financial investment and a conducive environment. (Ahamad, Sinha & Shastri, 2016). This was the only way these nations could recuperate from the rigors of war and isolation.

At an individual level, education has an important role in the facilitation of social and economic improvement. It is through education that individuals have access to opportunities and gives them the chance to enter labor markets and have better livelihoods. As the saying goes, education is the key to betterment, citizens need to embrace it if society is going to thrive. People who are educated are bound to widen their democratic participation and improve their social life (Goel & Vijay, 2017). Every individual cannot join the job market some have the urge to innovate and go

into business themselves. Education is the best base for anyone who has aspirations of becoming an entrepreneur.

Education provides all of the skills necessary for success in business and opens an individual's mind to a world of possibilities. Every innovator requires some basics that can help him/her to actualize a concept that they have in mind. Further, it is during the education process that linkages and partnerships are established. From these connections, new ideas and concepts have been born, especially in colleges and universities. Overall, employers and the economy stand to benefit from a population of well-informed individuals, each of whom are able to pursue their individual dreams.

Education, though central to having a vibrant base of human capital, remains a challenge to many. Structural deficiencies remain worldwide denying many children and young people access to education. These deficiencies are by omission and commission. It is evident that despite the importance of a good education, the leadership in Africa and other developing nations, seems oblivious of the shortcomings they face. Governments in developing countries have not invested enough in education. There is a shortage of staff and infrastructure, meaning not enough schools and teachers are few and far between. Teachers are ill equipped and not incentivized to work hard at their task of nurturing their students.

Those who have access to school are not at par with some students privileged in terms of learning environment, economic circumstances and educational resources. Schools in urban areas continue to outperform their rural counterparts and private schools still top the standings every year. Gender disparities exist, where more boys than girls complete the educational cycles although the gap is rapidly diminishing. The cost of education continues to increase with the tuition fees required for university becoming expensive for parents every passing year. University and college education may soon become unattainable for majority of the world's poor if the present trend goes unchecked.

Vocational training is an avenue through which a society creates a pool of skilled manpower that is capable of increasing industrial output. It is a process of education that readies people to participate in various jobs including particular trades and crafts or even as technicians. Vocational education happens at the post-secondary, further education, and higher education level. Alternatively, it can be pursued as an apprenticeship. In the past, people who were masons,

iron smiths and carpenters passed down their knowledge to several apprentices. It is from these apprentices that their way of doing things grew.

Just as in previous years, most vocational training happens in class or practically at a job site. The students are taught by professors and professionals with knowledge in the field of focus. Recently, online vocational courses have cropped up increasing the reach of vocational schools and making such training easier for a larger pool of students. People do not have to physically attend a class. The World Bank has recently recommended that general and vocational education to have some flexibility and intersectionality which will enable future workers to shift and adjust to a job market that shifts with changes in technology.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has been part of formal education since the very founding of the nation's school system. The colonial government, run by the British, introduced TVET as a means of generating skilled human resource for use in the building and establishment of the colony. The natives, though skilled in their own way of life were not at a position to help the colonialists in their day to day routine. Industrial training in Kenya goes as far back as 1921 when the colony was still young. TVET institutions churned out needed construction workers, home, office furniture, and agricultural workers and they still do (Sang, Muthaa & Mbugua, 2012).

These workers had been taught to things from a practical perspective which enabled them to slot seamlessly into the production line. TVET has been presented as an alternative to university education. In Kenya, it is usually pursued by those who are unable to gain entry into universities or lack the finances to pay their way through private colleges. These colleges have proved to be an important tool for empowerment as they have successfully introduced young people, both male and female into the job market (Sang, Muthaa & Mbugua, 2012).

In Kenya, County governments have been given the mandate to revive and operate village polytechnics which provide TVET at the local level (Hicks, 2013). The counties have received funds to this effect along with support for early childhood education (ECD) centers. The national government is now concentrating on universities, primary and secondary schools. Counties have fulfilled this mandate to the best of their ability. With the increase in the number of TVET institutions at the local level, more women have the opportunity to learn trade and soft skills for the job market. The competition for what were, at a time, limited slots is now gone and there are

chances for anyone interested to participate. These village polytechnics give women an opportunity to better themselves all around the country (Hicks, 2013).

However, the efficacy of the TVET approach has been called into question several times before. There have been accusations of low-level jobs with very little pay being the only outcome of TVET certification. Considering that the skill sets that are taught in these institutions are not at the "elite" level, it is not uncommon for graduates from TVET institutions to find themselves within the informal sector. It is this label that TVET institutions have struggled to shed. For decades, they have been viewed by the wider society as a chance for "failures" to "get something to do" as opposed to institutions that can actually provide skilled staff for the economy. TVETs were mentally relegated to a last resort, collectively by Kenyan society which has long held a bias against these institutions.

TVET institutions remain ill equipped and poorly staffed. In as much as they are making a great difference it is not guaranteed that they will produce quality staff and other types of workers. The lack of equipment and trained staff stems from years of neglect and poor management. Due to the neglect and negative attitude, these institutions have struggled to maintain a competitive edge in the market. For people to appreciate these institutions, there is a need for a restoration in terms of public perspective. The TVET institutions must prove that they are functional and operating at optimal levels. There must be a high level of outputs within different settings as opposed to a game of chance where some people benefit while many others do not.

The situation seems more complex than it appears. The TVET institutions are facing competition from private institutions that are offering the same type of training. However, the TVETs still hold one key advantage, and that is certification. Certification from the state run TVET institutions have credible certification and standardized curriculums that are much more effective compared to private institutions. In the long run, the TVET institutions in Kenya despite their failings and constant issues, remain competitive due to the advantages they offer to people interested in learning a skill.

Internationally, the gap between women and men has been reduced but much of it remains in place. Women are still poorly represented in leadership, business and the workplace. Statistics show that women do not earn the same wages for the same work. At the same time, there are some sectors are male dominated meaning the male numbers effectively shuts female

participation out. This gap needs to be reduced if not eliminated in all aspects of the market. It should also be the source of much focus across the board. Internationally the wage and opportunity gap has received significant attention. A similar situation exists in Kenya.

Kenya remains a patriarchal society to this day with women remaining at the fringes of almost all spheres of life. In majority of Kenya's cultures women are meant to occupy a subservient position that lacks power and influence. For decades, women have been subjugated and cast aside. Cultural and traditional duties have also hindered their access to education and other means of educational development. Women have to bear children and raise them with minimal male input and support which turns out to be a massive hindrance in women empowerment. Women remain among the nation's poorest with the Government and non-state actors striving to bridge the gender gap in terms of wages, opportunities and education.

Occupational gender segregation has been identified as one of the reasons why women earn much less compared to their male counterparts. When women crossover into male dominated fields of employment stand to benefit more than those who don't. Women who crossover make three times higher profits and earning than those who do not. TVET provides women with an opportunity to crossover into jobs that were the exclusive preserve of males. This gives them an opportunity to improve their economic capacity and gets them access to much needed capital.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The new constitution created devolved government units in the form of counties and wards. These counties have been charged with running community based vocational training centers that existed before the change in government structure. Now that these institutions are in the control of the county structures, there are more chances for young men and women to get training in traditional trades such as skilled construction (e.g., masonry, carpentry, plumbing), automotive mechanics and tailoring along with business, computers and secretarial skills (Hicks, 2013). Access to finance is one thing that women can use in the quest for socio economic empowerment. In order to access finance, women need education and the skill to tap into the job and self-employment market (Buehren, & Van Salisbury, 2017). In Kenya, women continue to strive to overcome the patriarchal hurdles that bar them from supporting themselves and their families. One of these hurdles has been the lack of skills training for those without formal education. Community vocational training centers present women with an opportunity to have

marketable skills that they can use to get jobs or become self-employed (Falavigna, Ragazzi & Sella, 2015). Most of the skills on offer were viewed as "men's work" but over time, women have slowly debunked this belief. With the new avenues provided with these skills, women, especially those from low income areas, can finally seek solution to their financial challenges and long-term socio-economic empowerment. Studies have shown that TVET in general, has a tangible impact on the student's quality of life. However, there is still a gap when it comes to linking TVET and its effect on young women specifically. The impact on TVET on youth in general is well captures but the training of women from a feminist perspective is yet to be done. Therefore, this study sought to look into the role of the Community vocational training centers in the wider socio-economic empowerment of women Nakuru Town East Sub-County. It compared women who have gone through TVET and those who have not to see if the training made an impact on their quality of life.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 Overall objective

To look at the role of the Community vocational training centers in the wider socio-economic empowerment of women.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

1. To find out the effects of skills training on social economic empowerment of women.
2. To examine the impact of Technical and Vocational Education and Training on social economic empowerment of women.
3. To explore ways of improving the performance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training on social economic empowerment of women.

1.4 Research questions

1. What is the effect of skills training on social economic empowerment of women?
2. What is the overall impact of TVET on social economic empowerment of women?
3. What are some of the ways of improving the performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women?

1.5 Area of study

The study was carried out in Nakuru Town East Sub-County. This area was selected because there are three polytechnics which source students from the larger Nakuru County and its environs. Carrying out the study there made it easier to identify and interview people who attended the polytechnics. It was easier to contact former students who may have not moved far from where they were. Some even volunteered themselves without much effort. The area is composed of people who are endowed at different levels financially. It is important that there is a contrast between the people of the area for there to be a marked difference between women who attended the TVET training centers and those who did not. Nakuru Town East Sub-County is also home to a large population of young people and is a commercial center for the surrounding Sub-Counties. This status attracts people even from very other surrounding county in Nakuru

1.6 Significance of the study

Women empowerment has been tackled on so many different levels. There is the financial aspect being done through table banking and micro finance. On another level, affirmative action and the constitutionally mandated two thirds rule has brought women into leadership. Education of the girl child has made significant gains. More girls are in school than there were in the past as the transition from one level to the next improves steadily. Women and girls are now competing with their male counterparts for academic success. Over time, women have embraced the entire spectrum of education, including the sciences and other sophisticated courses. TVET is one part of this holistic process that has not been fully explored. This study presented a unique look at the significance or failure of TVET in the empowerment of women. It also presented a new line of inquiry in the entire spectrum of women empowerment, especially when it comes to female participation in male dominated sectors like construction and electrical engineering.

The study will be used by counties and the national government in their initiatives aimed at empowering women. The authorities will be able to use the existing community vocational centers better and also find ways to establish new ones in a manner that will serve young remove men from the data, the information should focus purely on women better.

The study will also serve the ministry of education and those running the centers by showing what works and what needs to be altered in order for the institutions to have a positive impact on

the lives of women. It shall also add to the body of knowledge that exists on Community vocational training centers and their effects on the socio-economic futures of their students.

1.7 Limitations of the study

One key limitation was the identification and recruitment of study participants. In order for the study to have valid results the participants had to be former students of TVET institutions. Those identified had to be willing and able to participate. This created a relatively limited pool of participants from which all of them would be drawn. This made recruitment a daunting task, but it was possible to carry out when done slowly and precisely.

Another limitation was the accessibility of documents from institutions that the researcher intended to work with. Some of these institutions have not been well run for decades. Since they were government projects, the strictness in documentation was lacking. Class and school attendance was at an all-time low because students were left mostly to their own devices. Most of the teachers were also poor in carrying out their mandate which made it harder to trace their former trainees.

1.8 Definition of terms

Skills training: Skills training is meant to give employees targeted training that will provide them with knowledge and abilities that are vital in the process of carrying out their activities. It is also vital in the process of re-educating and retraining workers

Social economic empowerment: is the process of building up a level of autonomy and self-confidence. People who are socially and economically empowered can shift the institutions and circumstances that placed them at a marked disadvantage in terms of poverty.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): is a system of education that gives a level of knowledge and skills for employment. This system utilizes various learning techniques and is an avenue through which social equity, and development can be achieved.

Human capital: is the economic value of an individual worker's knowledge and skills. It can be measured at the company, and national level. A country with strong human capital is bound to perform better.

Vocational training centers: is the type of training that focuses on a particular career or trade. The lessons are about providing literal application of skills that one gets to use. What separates vocational training from the other systems is the capacity for practical training over theory.

Cultural and traditional duties: These are societal roles that are expected of both male and female members of a community. They are different from one place to another based on tribal and geographical influence.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the literature available on the role of the Community vocational training centers in the wider socio-economic empowerment of women. In this section, the focus will be on the position of vocational education in the process of women socio-economic empowerment, the impact of vocational training centers on socio-economic empowerment of women and the role of advocacy in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women.

2.1 Theoretical framework

This paper derives its theoretical basis from Liberal feminism and Critical Conflict Theory. A concise explanation of both is provided below.

2.1.1 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism as opposed to radical feminism is an individualistic approach to the feminist theory. Liberal feminism posits that society erroneously holds that women are intellectually and physically incapable in all aspects of life compared to men. This belief is the basis for discrimination and oppression of women. Therefore, in order to deal with this, liberal feminists recommend that political and legal reforms are imposed to bridge this gap. Liberal feminism holds dear several ideals (Law, 2019). They believe that all people in the world are equal in every way. Men and women are essentially the same. Therefore, they need equal opportunity and freedom in order for people to live an ideal lifestyle. Liberal feminists also state that gender is not determined by sex. People can choose the type of gender roles that they prefer. One point of inequality, liberal feminists posit, is the difference in participation between men and women in spheres beyond the family (Jaquette, 2018). For example, men earn more money, get more opportunities compared to women. Women also have limited access to education and social capital. It is the ambition of liberal feminists that there is social change where patriarchy is replaced with a meritocracy that social rank is given based on merit. This new system would remove hierarchy and inequality while also embracing rationality. Liberal feminists have also stated that oppression of women is not a key component in capitalism and it stands to benefit from such reforms. One key to change, according to liberal feminist scholars is that education is

key to this desired change (Law, 2019). This, therefore, creates the link between the theory and this study. Through educating women, who would not have accessed the skill set provided by TVET institutions, society moves closer to equality. This is because women will be able to challenge their male counterparts even in sectors which were largely the preserve of men. Over time, women will come up to a near equal status economically and socially with their male colleagues.

2.1.2 Critical Conflict Theory

The critical conflict theory goes back to the theory suggested by Karl Marx. He believed that society is in a constant state of conflict and that there is competition for limited resources. Marx stated that society was based on dominance and power as opposed to consensus. It is the competition for power that continues to this day where the wealthy suppress the poor and powerless. Each side relentlessly seeks to maximize its benefits in the wider scheme of things. Critical Conflict Theory presents a view that vocational training centers are failing in their effort to change the lives of young women due to several factors (Akhuemonkhan, Raim & Dada, 2014). There are sources of conflict in the education sector.

The critical conflict theory posits that education, despite being envisioned by many scholars and other theorists as a means of change and development, it can also be a tool used by the elites to entrench social inequalities in terms of gender, class, even race. The presence of social inequality that stems from education that is not beneficial to those who are not privileged has many historical references. Modern society, in almost every country including Kenya, is shaped around a small elite of the rich and powerful surrounded by masses who are struggling to make ends meet in poor and neglected circumstances (Akhuemonkhan, Raim & Dada, 2014). Crucial conflict theory posits that educational institutions have been largely ineffective in carrying out their functions because the elites have denied these institutions access to funds and support something that has been witnessed in Kenya in the past. Subsequent governments have treated vocational training institutions as an afterthought yet they give people from poor backgrounds their best ability to grow and earn a decent wage.

2.2 Theoretical literature review

2.2.1 Effects of skills training on social economic empowerment of women.

Discrimination based on gender is one of the causes of poverty and hardship in the world. Women and girls endure almost constant marginalization in every aspect of their lives. They have little financial or political power right from the family set up, community level to the wider society. Patriarchy is still a leading determinant especially in Africa where retrogressive practices like FGM and wife inheritance are still going on. There may be a bid to change all this but the distance to be covered is still quite wide. Development initiatives so far have either left them behind or done little to fix their underlying problems (Hamisu et al., 2017). Women and girls suffer violence or the threat of violence and a blatant denial of their basic rights in so many instances. Rape, sexual and physical abuse are still rampant in Kenya and in Africa as a whole. This violence and regular violation of women's inherent rights keeps them is a cocoon and limits their options. A woman is kept in place by her environment and if it doesn't change then her plight is bound to remain the same (Hamisu et al., 2017).

According to Goel & Vijay (2017), girls face the challenge of financial capital. Many girls and women still struggle with the dynamics of patriarchal society where they do not have access to wealth or means to generate income. Women, in most societies are not allowed to inherit land and their progress is largely dependent on male presence in their lives. They lack the tools required to forge their way into financial and social independence due to limited space within the job market and open discrimination in favor of men. As opposed to handouts and token opportunities, women need an active plan that will bridge the gap between men and women in terms of employment numbers and the ever-widening wage gap. In order for change to take place there is a need for a system that gives women and girls a fair shot in the market (Goel & Vijay 2017). The present system appears to be in favor of patriarchy to deliver substantial benefits for women even in the long term.

To achieve this there are three methodologies that can be employed namely financial, employment, and life-skills and social support strategies (Goel & Vijay, 2017). Women require financial assistance to start their own businesses, marketable means of earning regular pay and the ability to make social and personal decisions that will have a lasting impact on their lives. It is the classic approach that demands teaching a person to fish in order to feed him/her for a lifetime. Women require skills and knowledge that will enable them to actively participate in the

job market either as innovators or as employees. Locking them out completely is detrimental to them and to society as a whole. Education can come in so many forms but in this study the focus shall be on vocational training. Vocational training/education is a process that prepares men and women to work as technicians and various trades and crafts. It is often also referred to as technical training or career education. Vocational training is one of the methods through which women can create employment opportunities. It is imperative that women are at a point of reacting to market needs so the training has to be of a certain quality and that employers have to be willing to hire participants (Goel, & Vijay, 2017).

Therefore, vocational training can transform the social fabric around women and girls because they will have better job prospects and social capital. Girls need a route out of poverty for themselves and their families. Statistics show that women make up most of the world's poor and this has a knock-on effect on themselves and their social networks. Therefore, especially in developing countries, society is lagging behind because women have been left behind in almost all aspects of capacity building. Communities cannot progress if women are not at the forefront of developmental activities. Workforce development and employment strategies are vital in this process and have to be strategically utilized. Once these young women enter the job market, they are able to support their parents and siblings while also attaining mobility, creating new links and relationship and the added advantage of personal autonomy (Ahamad, Sinha & Shastri, 2016). This translates to progress for them and their offspring. Even in unions, the women are able to contribute towards financial stability of the home strengthening communities as a result. This has the potential to bridge some of the development issues that the world and Kenya in particular, is facing.

According to Chowdhury (2015), one of the main targets of TVET institutions has been the promotion of women's education. There have been efforts to create more avenues for training and development including TVET. Advocates for women's rights recognize the fact that women need to have the knowledge and skills necessary to advance themselves in the marketplace. In the past, women were left out of the job market completely because they had nothing to offer at that point. Women were not allowed or subtly prevented form furthering their education as the emphasis was on marriage and bearing children. Women were also largely expected to stay at home and labor for the family. This has since changed and there is a clear need to keep them

advancing within the various institutions in the economy. TVET, should run parallel to workplace policies and programs that get women to advance themselves in all levels. There should be company supported opportunities for education and training including vocational training and business literacy where the women can use this know-how beyond the workplace (Chowdhury, 2015). It is in this way that women can grow into leadership positions where female representation is still very low.

According to Kinney, Boldosser-Boesch, & McCallon (2016) economic empowerment of girls depends on the availability of jobs and an environment where they can participate in those jobs. TVET institutions and policymakers must promote and agitate for gender equality in the workplace and incentivize firms to establish environments where women can be productive and free of harassment and general maltreatment. It is another societal hurdle that women have to overcome at almost every level. Women find themselves struggling for basic respect and acceptance. Despite being qualified they are still expected to occupy gender roles even in the workplace. They are regularly relegated to carrying out female centered duties and given "wifely" instructions even in meetings. It attacks their self-esteem and negates the advocacy and the effort expended to get them there. This means that women who have been seconded by vocational training centers should be brought into a place where they are assured of respect and support for human rights and nondiscrimination. Reality should not remove them from one harsh environment into another that has little change and produces more friction for them to overcome.

However, vocational training is faced with the challenge of the surrounding economic environment. The training cannot change the unemployment rate in the country that the youth have to overcome (Ahamad, Sinha & Shastri, 2016). Whenever economic crises happen, it is the low level jobs and the youth who miss opportunities the most to earn a living. Girls and women, in such situations face higher rates of unemployment compared to boys of the same age (Ahamad, Sinha & Shastri, 2016). Discrimination and other obligations within the home expose women to unemployment while the men do not have to contend with some of these pitfalls. The general state of the economy and the prevailing climate in the marketplace have a vital role in vocational training. The trainees need a place to actualize what they have been taught to do. As the economy grows and the need for certain skills will go up and that will first open up

opportunities for men who are then followed by women. When the opposite occurs, vocational training may not be enough to stimulate a failing economy and shrinking job market.

Vocational training is important in enabling girls to get jobs. In majority of the courses offered at vocational training centers, the main idea is to impart increased technical capacity, basic business concepts and the tenets of entrepreneurship (Hilal, & McGrath, 2016). These competencies are crucial in the process of empowering oneself for both men and women. As in the case in most countries with vocational training, the skills and technical capacity provided is meant for sectors that are not effectively covered by other institutions of higher learning. Therefore, these jobs are meant to fill a gap in the economy that exists due to a lack of coverage. Vocational training is known for producing service sector workers like mechanics, plumbers and carpenters. Without these kinds of skills, the construction sector would suffer and not achieve its targets. Vocational training also produces operators for specialized machinery and heavy equipment, techniques that are never handled in other institutions.

Vocational training is mainly driven by demand and is meant to create a pool of skilled workers that are in a position to fulfill the needs of employers in the market (Hilal & McGrath, 2016). Soft skills are also on offer within vocational training courses which include conflict resolution, team building, and communication. These soft skills are applicable across a host of situations, all of which can help women thrive socially and politically. It is often overlooked that soft skills can have a lasting impact on an individual's ability to negotiate through the ups and downs of life. Women, especially younger women require such insights if they are to ever overcome the hurdles placed before them. They will have to negotiate for safe sexual practices, overcome societal pressures and advocate for their rights and protections in life. According to Hilal & McGrath (2016) The successes of vocational training programs can only be measured based on their ability to help women acquire all the technical know-how and soft skills that will make them grow holistically as workers and individuals in society. Vocational training should aim to transform the lives of women beyond the classroom for there to be permanent change in the community. Only in this way will the shift be sustainable.

Vocational training has an impact on earnings and employment. There have been studies conducted before on the efficacy of such types of initiatives on girls in various countries. Johnson (2015) explained that in Liberia, the World Bank carried out a study on technical skills

training that was going on in that country. The project involved training adolescent girls and then finding job placements for them in companies that needed caterers, painters, drivers and professional cleaners. The results were quite positive. In a country such as Liberia that has been ravaged by civil war and suffers from poor infrastructure, vocational training has proved to be more effective than formal education. Formal education requires time and a level of concentration that many of the beneficiaries of the project did not have. At the same time, many were young mothers or has some obligations to fulfil which made the need for an income urgent. The results proved that despite patriarchal systems and widespread illiteracy, women can still be elevated to a new level with the right kind of strategy and proper execution (Johnson, 2015).

Up to 50 % of the girls were employed and there was 115% increase in their earnings. Therefore, the technical skills training indeed had a hand in their economic outlook (Johnson, 2015). The increase in employment and income also, in turn, improved the girl's social standing and gave them power to make the decisions and have greater agency over their lives. In the areas where the project took place, the communities adopted a different shape compared to where there was none. Women and girls could pursue their own desires and seek leisure, something they could not do when they were dependent on their male counterparts. Many of these changes are bound to make a lasting transformation in the years to come. Women can have a voice in political arena and even own property, things that were impossible to accomplish without the window opened by vocational training. Such initiatives need to be replicated in as many other areas of the world as possible.

On the other hand, Mulder (2018) showed that vocational training does not work every time. In Jordan, a vocational training initiative failed to reach the heights achieved by those in other countries. The initiative provided companies with vouchers as an incentive to take in female graduates who had been through vocational training in professional skills. In simpler terms, companies were encouraged to hire female staff members who had recently graduated from technical training in a country that still embraces conservative cultural and Muslim values. These values are against the participation of women in business activities and promote a patriarchal way of life. The hurdles were set even before the start of the program mostly due to the mentality of Jordanian society. Even though the people who came up with the concept were optimistic,

there were challenges that were bound to emerge. The initial group of 300 young women started off quite well but things went from bad to worse over time.

The young women reduced in number several months after the end of the program. A follow up revealed that the workplaces that the women were sent to were hostile and made their working lives very difficult (Mulder, 2018). In most instances, the women were never truly accepted in their places of work. These women felt excluded from decision making and their efforts were rarely acknowledged. Never seen as equals, their input was rarely included and they were left to feel ignored and belittled by their majority male counterparts. This created a volatile environment that many of the women who had no option but to quit their jobs. Therefore, vocational training is not an end in itself. There are other things that have to be eradicated for women to be comfortable in the workforce. The Jordanian project must have set the environment before implementation because communities cannot be changed without being willing to try something new. Men must be willing to work on their mentality and attitude towards women in such a setting for the vocational training to have an impact.

Vocational training cannot be one size fits all. The Jordanian project has proved that. Even though girls continue to be disadvantaged and marginalized one should avoid treating them as a homogeneous entity. Girls face diverse challenges and equally, have different experiences, across age groups, ethnicities, and abilities. Women in Africa face a completely different set of issues compared to those living in South America. Although there may be so many similarities in their plight it is not accurate to operate under the same assumptions. Economic and social support systems are also quite diverse and unique. Girls of a young age do not share the same needs as those of young mothers (Shan, Liu & Li, 2015). Further, there are those who have physical and learning disabilities which pose another unique problem. If one was to present vocational training as an intervention in the socio-economic empowerment of women, then all these realities have to be taken into consideration. That means that projects need to fully understand and appreciate the surroundings of a place like Kenya and evaluate the areas where the initiative can have a meaningful contribution in the empowerment of women.

Therefore, vocational training initiatives need to take this into account in planning and design. That way the girls will respond to the training and put what they have to good use. It is important to avoid environmental pitfalls and societal bottlenecks when coming up with such a program.

On the other hand, the supportive environment has to be established for the trainees to thrive in the job market. The government must formulate policies and laws that safeguard women's rights and protect them from discrimination and exploitation in the job market (Shan, Liu, & Li, 2015). Ultimately, it still boils down to the role of the state. People cannot operate in a vacuum so the state still shoulders most of the responsibility in the process of women empowerment. Non state actors and individuals can only do so much, but the government must set the stage for women to progress in life. Without state intervention and deliberate actions, then all the vocational training in the world will not have the desired effect. That is why TVET initiatives in developed countries record better outcomes compared to those in emerging economies.

2.2.2 Impact of TVET on social economic empowerment of women

According to Shetty, & Hans (2015) TVET has been part of the general discussion on education since the industrial revolution. The main concept was to produce workers who would transition easier into the workplace to serve the industries that powered the economy. The new workers had to be honed and ready to be productive from the first day. It was shrouded in the quest for profit and the need for efficiency in the labor market. Over time, TVET's status plummeted as the government and the main authorities focused more on basic education. In the past, people were less likely to attend basic education because of the need for most family members of working age to bring in some form of an income. Children were employed to do low level labour while teens were treated as adults. All that has changed over time with children given responsibility at a much older age meaning there is no need for technical skills until a certain threshold. This means basic education slowly emerged as the main priority, especially with the benefits of formal education outdoing those of vocational training.

There was a general consensus that primary education provided better returns compared to TVET (Shetty & Hans, 2015). Over time, resources and time were dedicated towards the primary education, leaving TVET without what it needs to operate at an optimum level. Eventually, primary education overcame TVETs, effectively eliminating the perception the TVETs were an integral part of the education system. The transition from primary to secondary then tertiary was easier in the formal format of education compared to the alternative. TVET, as time went by became more and more isolated. It was largely viewed as something that is out on its own compared to a single continuous process. It is important to note, however that TVET are still

part of the system but their influence has been hampered over the years (Shetty & Hans, 2015). A negative perception perhaps arose from the fact that TVET became an unwanted option compared to other available alternatives. People believed those without options were the ones who chose TVET. Over time, this has been ingrained into the system to a point that very few can willingly opt for TVET. This, however, does not negate its importance and capacity to make lasting changes within any given system

There have been many positive results of vocational training. People who opted for vocational training have shared in various studies that they experienced increased wages, employment mobility, increased employment opportunity. This is because vocational training opens up new possibilities. People who were unemployed and unskilled can bid for opportunities they could not take advantage of before. All this is at a relatively low cost compared to full tertiary education that requires significant financial backing. Vocational training indeed provides better lives and a pathway towards positive outcomes for those involved. TVETs have been famed for transforming people (Orlova et al., 2016). Vocational training has been praised for improving efficiency, intervention and organizational culture. Vocational training creates workers primed to slot seamlessly into the staff and carry out their required mandate. These trainees are in the right mental and technical position to make a difference where they are required to. They are in a better position compared to untrained individuals who receive on the job training.

This is because of the character change that vocational training inspires. Once someone goes through a TVET he/she come out a different individual. Vocational training shapes an individual on so many levels. Trainees are exposed to other types of information apart from the particular skill that they had come to learn. Most of this information is composed of things they need to know and understand that they might not have encountered in their normal life. They are able to make personal decisions and offer leadership where the need arises. It is this efficacy that has brought admiration for Vocational training. In Europe there has been a marked success in vocational training and employment. In countries in the EU where TVETs are an integral part of the education structures, people have credited TVET institutions with enabling people to start business and join employment (Orlova et al., 2016). These are men and women who would have been stuck in lower level, low paying jobs that tend not to have long term prospects and are in

high demand. As a result, the economy at the Macro and micro level have changed because of the role of those who have received relevant, accurate vocational training.

There exists negative social perceptions when it comes to vocational training. Even though it produced positive results for people of both genders it is still a course that people still do not view as prestigious. Vocational institutions of higher learning are regarded as lesser institutions compared to the universities and other formal settings. Nations have placed more emphasis on universities which require and receive a bulk of the funding. This leaves relatively limited amounts of money for the growth and improvement of vocational institutions. In the end, they lack quality facilities and the required level of instructors. As a result, the youth tend to shy away from such institutions in favor of the better looking, effectively set up universities. Meanwhile, the TVETs remain crippled by their inability to attract potential trainees (Sigu, 2017). Without trainees, the financial burden for the TVETs is worsened. The lack of prestige and a general belief that the other institutions carry more weight compared to the skills and understanding based approach of vocational training has created a hurdle for young people. There has been a renewed call for more people to learn a trade or a long-term skill as the world over, there is a shortage of artisans due to this.

There is a worldwide overdependence on academic grading to know an individual's success in school. Though grading may work in such situations, the challenge stems from the issue that vocational training is more hands on and practical with very little theoretical evaluation. This relegates vocational training to the lower levels of education because of the lack of assessments that match up to the rest of the industry. It has long been accepted as a tradition that individuals are respected and looked down upon due to their university results. The emphasis is on the honors lists and who did particularly well as opposed to seeing who managed to graduate. Since Vocational institutions do not offer this then they are often viewed as a separate strand of education that is not on an even keel with the others. People still judge others as failures/successes based on his/her educational exploits (Sigu, 2017). Since there are very few written results, a vocational education graduate will be assumed to be a failure compared to someone who was in university and got second class honors.

Despite the negative perception, the positive impact on women is undeniable. Vocational training has enabled women to join even male dominated sectors in the economy (Kanjilal-Bhaduri &

Pastore, 2018). Women, through vocational training, have gained technical expertise to join various trades like building and construction, engineering and motor vehicle repair. Before the advent of vocational training, women were all but barred from participating. The system then was via apprenticeship and very few, if any men were willing to have a female apprentice. This can be chalked up to the societal and cultural attitudes but ultimately, the challenge lies in the view that women simply did not have the strength or the ability to carry out these tasks. There was an age where female operators of heavy machinery were nonexistent and the only females on construction sites were food vendors. Vocational training has reduced this gap significantly and the myth is being broken.

These jobs were the preserve of men but now women are taking up positions within these industries with the idea of joining these places coming from existing relationships with people who work in the associated trade (Kanjilal-Bhaduri & Pastore, 2018). Women have actively engaged in formerly male dominated fields mainly due to, personal preferences and future work prospects. These male dominated fields are still some of the highest earning in the informal sector. The informal sector is fed by the vocational training system and it is within such an economy that women have to fight for space and recognition within. Mechanics and skilled construction workers are more likely to get well paying roles as opposed to other informal sector jobs. Women have to take the extra step and jostle for positions within these places if they are to earn a decent wage and change the position of their families. It is within such settings that repeat opportunities occur.

The ability to choose and follow a particular path is part of the motivational and attitude change caused by learning at a vocational institution. The challenge for women was the issue of choice. Their options were often limited or even out rightly prescribed by others who claimed to know what was best for them. This has since changed because in the vocational training centers, all the students are equal. The shift in self-esteem and general courage has led to the disruption of traditional gender beliefs and a shift in young women's preferences when choosing between female or male-dominated courses (Sigu, 2017). Women are no longer forced to pursue secretarial, tailoring and hospitality-based courses that specifically targeted them. They are now, thanks to vocational training, a part of the wider plan for progress. They participate and excel in

traditional male dominated sectors because they are no longer afraid and are willing to take the initiative.

The gender pay gap is a challenge that is yet to be addressed. Advocacy efforts have been focused on ensuring equal training, including in male dominated fields, will result in equal pay for women and men. It is extremely unfair that women and girls are not given the chance to even the odds in terms of earnings. Institutions need to raise their pay plans to ensure that men and women are not remunerated differently for the same amount of work (Bresnahan et al., 2016). The equal pay debate has emerged as a massive talking point over the last few years because in terms of qualification and performance, women have since proved themselves. It is the companies and institutions the work for that need to recognize the issue and finally address it.

Gender based discrimination can only be remedied by gender sensitive recruitment and retention meaning women can train in vocational centers with the assurance that they would be able to transition into the job market (Bresnahan et al., 2016). The changes should be holistic in its approach to women, vocational training and the job market. Enough women should be able to join the vocational centers and even participate in male dominated fields. Next, policies and practices should guarantee that women will receive equal consideration when it comes to recruitment based on their qualification. Male mechanics should not be giving a priority just as females in the hospitality sector are not considered first over their male counterparts. The fairness in recruitment and deployment should be equal at the school level and the job level for there to be a meaningful change in the socio-economic position of women.

2.2.3 Ways of improving the performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women.

Women have faced years of subjugation and being treated like secondhand citizens. There has been a concerted effort over the past decade that has led to some progress (Hamisu et al., 2017). There has been a marked improvement, to some level, in women's health and nutrition, income generation, education and leadership. More girls are in school compared to two decades ago. Women are also getting spaces in university and increasing numbers are taking up STEM courses where there were skewed recruitment figures. There is still some way to go with initiatives like vocational training still recruiting more young men than women. Activists have pointed out that TVET institutions have a role in advancing women's and girls' rights and

dignity in state's policies and practices (Hamisu et al., 2017). One way of achieving this is to bridge the gap in vocational training recruitment figured through policy changes.

One impediment to the advancement of women has been access to vocational and information technology education which leaves them at a disadvantage in the workplace. Access goes hand in hand with the opportunity to be in a position to build formal and informal networks which are normally established at colleges and learning institutions (Kinney, Boldosser-Boesch, & McCallon, 2016). Programs involving vocational training should also present women with mentorship opportunities. Critics have pointed out that women lack access to networks that appear to cement male leadership and power. Men tend to recruit within their networks and circles of influence. Often, women are underrepresented in such area and it is only through mentorship and a recognition that women have something to offer that can remedy this situation. Improved TVET institutions should bring about changes even in the social set up within the marketplace to allow for more female participation and contribution (Hamisu et al.,2017). These improvements do not, however, discriminate because such programs should benefit both men and women because companies need competent staff no matter their gender. Therefore, it is a win-win situation for all the parties involved.

In order to improve the performance of TVET institutions the trainers have to improve their capacity. When the trainers get better at their functions then the students are more likely to succeed in school and in their preferred sector. This means that existing staff need to be taken to refresher courses. These courses should be designed to get the trainers excited again about their purpose and show them new ways of teaching the students (Adema, Malietso, & Anyanje, 2019). Some of these trainers have never been updated since they left their colleges so it may be prudent to get them up to speed. The county government can even sponsor professional development sessions so that the trainers are better equipped. The number of staff will also need to increase because staffing levels are low in TVET institutions (Adema, Malietso & Anyanje, 2019). With more staff, institutions will be in a position to serve more students therefore giving more women a chance to enter the skilled job market.

TVET institutions are a pathway to jobs in the various industries that exist within the country. It makes much sense to increase and improve collaboration between TVET institutions and these industries that benefit from the skilled labor. This ties into the point on mentorship where TVET

institutions should provide women with an opportunity to be mentored within the industry that they have trained to be a part of. The firms can support TVET institutions with financial and in-kind contributions. They can offer industrial attachment opportunities for students in TVET institutions (Adema, Malietso & Anyanje, 2019). This has been a challenge for many students and the greatest problem has been the fact that these attachments have been largely unpaid. TVET institutions and firms can also work together in innovations and research because such partnerships can be of mutual benefits. Some sectors like those in technology can provide the TVET institutions with technical support by training teachers and providing internet services.

2.5 Conceptual framework

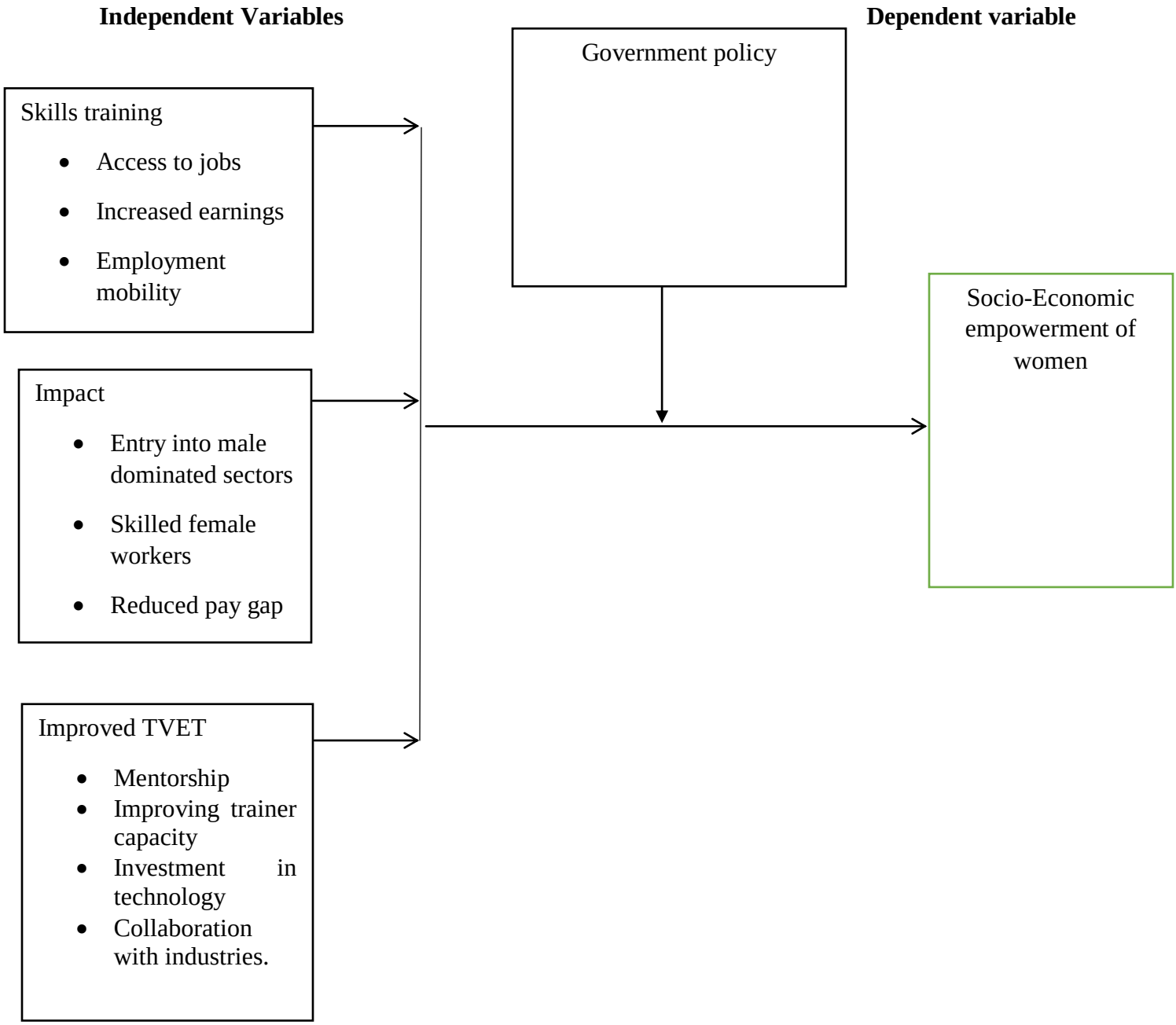


Figure 2.5: Conceptual framework

Source: Own Conceptual framework (2019)

The conceptual framework is the foundation on which the entire research project is based. It identifies the network of relationships among the variables considered important to the study of given problem.

The independent variables include Skills training, impact of the training and improvement of vocational education. Vocational education gives women Access to marketable job skills that leads to employment opportunities and financial capital. Economic empowerment leads to control over and allocation of financial resources, in this case, vocational education is a means through which women can get to financial resources. They also benefit from employment mobility meaning that they can shift from one sector to another because of their skills and capacity.

The second independent variable is impact of TVET which leads women to increased wages, entry into male dominated sectors along with reduction in the pay gap. When women receive vocational training, they are able to venture into job opportunities that provide increased wages which are often male dominated. When they get to these sectors, they have access to greater financial stability which enable them to pick and choose what they want to do with their money. They can even move from one job to another all based on the salaries and wages so they gain autonomy, self-confidence and the ability to act individually.

The third independent variable is improvement of TVET institutions which pushes for Mentorship, improved trainer capacity, investment in technology and collaboration with industries. Once women gain better vocational education and training, they will be in a stronger position so that their skills are not ignored or taken for granted in the workplace. Improvement targets policies and laws that can influence the institutions to grow into a conducive environment for women to study and improve their lives.

The dependent variable is the socio-economic empowerment of women because that is the ultimate goal of the independent variables and their objectives. The indicators for socio economic empowerment of women will include ownership of homes, businesses, and independence in terms of financial decision. The other indicators could include leadership, influence over decisions in the home and membership of financial institutions like saccos and "chamas".

The intervening variable is the government policy on TVETs and gender equality. These policies shape the government's reaction and approach towards women empowerment. It is the independent variables that either promote or hinder community vocational training centers in

their initiative to help young women gain financial stability which in turn leads to social change in the long run.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the research methods that will be utilized in this study. The contents of the chapter will consist of the research design, target population, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, pilot study, instrument validity, instruments reliability, data collection techniques and legal and ethical considerations. It presents the way the study will investigate the role of the Community vocational training centers in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women.

3.1 Research design

The study adopted a descriptive and explanatory design. This way the detailed description comes before the final explanation. The descripto-explanatory design is the preferred method when the study seeks to explain a particular issue instead of just describing it (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). The main push of using this method was to identify the root cause of the phenomenon behind the inquiry. Descriptive research explores factors like behavior, values, and characteristics surrounding a certain position. Descriptive research is also quite useful in handling variables as they occur in their ordinary settings (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). Further, descriptive methods are used to unravel and evaluate the characteristics and unique features of a certain individual or collective. The method has also been used extensively in behavioral sciences as it presents various occurrences and types of behavior (Lewis, 2015).

3.2 Target population

For this study, the target population was women who have received training at TVET institutions within Nakuru East town Sub-County over the past five years (2020-2015). According to the County records, there are three TVET institutions in Nakuru East Town Sub-County. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) state that a target population is a group of individuals, cases or objects that share similar characteristics which are the focus of the study.

Table 3.1 Target population

TVETs In Nakuru Town East Sub County	No. of Students	No. of Women
Kenya Industrial Training Institute	500	150
Nakuru Youth Polytechnic	250	120
Lion Hill Youth Polytechnic	200	110
Total	950	380

Source: Nakuru East Sub County Education Department

1.3 Sample and sampling technique

The study used stratified sampling technique to come up with the study sample. A combined list of the participants was drawn from the database of the TVET schools in Nakuru Town East Sub County. These schools are the custodians of the information on the women who have undergone vocational training. The intent of stratified sampling was to have representation from all levels of the population including the subgroups that may exist among them (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The participants of had to include women who reside in different locales in Nakuru town and are drawn from diverse socio-economic classes.

The sample is a chunk of the population that is selected to be part of a research study. It defines the selected groups of elements, that is, individuals, groups and organizations (Mugenda, and Mugenda, 2009). According to Kothari (2010), the sample of 30% is sufficient for descriptive research. Therefore, the sample of this study comprised of 114 women selected from each of the TVET institutions located in Nakuru East Town Sub-County. This number was sufficient in providing the study with data.

Table 3.2 Sample and sampling technique

Institution	No. of Women	Sample Size
Kenya Industrial Training Institute	150	45
Nakuru Youth Polytechnic	120	36
Lion Hill Youth Polytechnic	110	33

Source: Nakuru East Sub County Education Department

3.4 Research instrument

The study primarily depended on questionnaires to get study data. Questionnaires are effective in collecting data because they do so in a standardized process which is much better than oral interviews which have so many possible parameters (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). The questionnaires presented structured, closed ended questions that were based on the objectives of the study in conjunction with the research questions.

3.5 Pilot study

For this study, to assess the reliability of the tool, a pilot test was held in a different location. A sample of 10-15 participants was identified and administered with the instrument. The participants initially filled in the questionnaire. Then the participants were then asked to comment on the contents of the questionnaire and make recommendations. After the pilot test, the researcher made the necessary adjustments to the document depending on the feedback from the exercise. Reliability is the capability of a research instrument to come up with consistent results even after several attempts. A good instrument should be able to come up with the same outcome no matter the location as long as it is aimed at the same respondents.

3.6 Instrument validity

Validity ensures that the results that stem from data analysis are in line with the phenomenon that is in focus (Heale & Twycross, 2015). It also reveals the accuracy of the data brought in along the parameters of the study variables. When an instrument is valid then the person conducting the study will come up with conclusion that are realistic and trustworthy. The validity of the instruments was determined in consultation with the supervisor (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). The supervisors reviewed the document and contributed to the removal of all the flaws and issues within it.

3.7 Data collection techniques

The researcher acquired the necessary documentation for the research activity. Once the documentation was in place then the next step was to carry out field visits to the TVET institutions to get the list of potential participants. Once the sample was identified, contact with them was established. Once the participants agreed to participate then the researcher administered the questionnaire. The participants were given verbal instructions and assured of

confidentiality. The researcher also answered any questions and clarified everything that was not clear. Once the questionnaires have been filled, the researcher collected them for interpretation.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is the procedure where the collected data is compiled in the form of facts and tables. The qualitative and quantitative data was coded and edited in a way that the findings can be extracted. The coding and presentation of the findings was done with the help of coding sheets and the Microsoft Excel. The Microsoft Excel program helped in analysis of the data which will be presented in the form of graphs, tables, and percentages. It is this data that will be used to come up with discussions, and conclusions.

3.9 Legal and ethical considerations

The paramount requirement for a research study is confidentiality. It was important that the participants felt secure and safeguarded when giving their views. The participants were assured that their information would be treated with confidentiality. They did not give their names, instead they were identified using unique codes. The documentation was kept in a secure location and kept away from unauthorized viewing. The participants gave information voluntarily. No participant was compelled or coerced to fill the questionnaires. This information was told to the participant before the questionnaire was administered.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the study results and explains the various dynamics within the data. The purpose of the study was to understand the role of the Community vocational training centers in the wider socio-economic empowerment of women. Specifically, it involved finding out the effects of skills training on social economic empowerment of women, examination the impact of TVET on social economic empowerment of women and exploration ways of improving the performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women.

The data was collected using a questionnaire and was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The findings will be presented in the form of bar graphs, pie charts and extended narrative. The presentation and analysis of data will form the basis for discussion and conclusion.

4.1 Questionnaire response rate

The intended sample of the study was 114 women selected from each of the TVET institutions located in Nakuru East Town Sub-County. The target was 45 participants from Kenya Industrial Training Institute, 36 from Nakuru Youth Polytechnic, and 33 from Lion Hill Youth Polytechnic. The response rate was lower than the target with 41 participants from Kenya Industrial Training Institute, 30 from Nakuru Youth Polytechnic, and 27 from Lion Hill Youth Polytechnic filling out and returning the questionnaires. This was an 86% response rate.

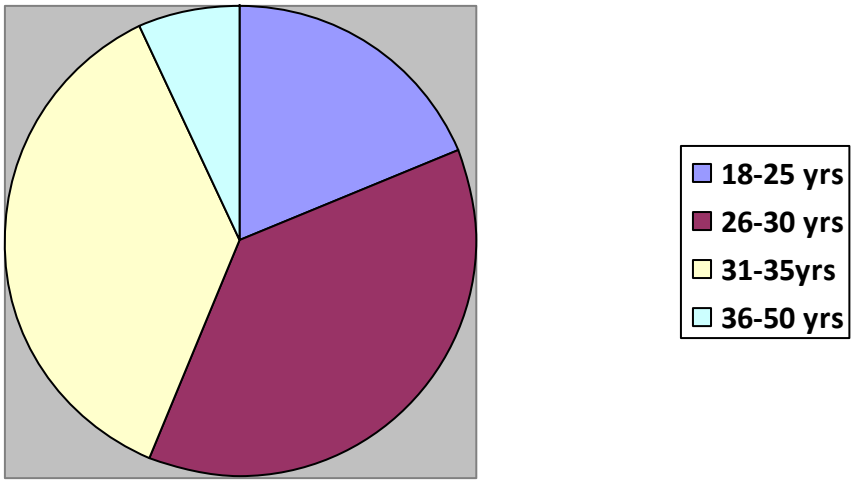
Table 4.1: Response rate

Institution	No. of Women	Sample Size	Number reached
Kenya Industrial Training Institute	150	45	41
Nakuru Youth Polytechnic	120	36	30
Lion Hill Youth Polytechnic	110	33	27
Total			98

4.2 Respondents Demographic information

In terms of gender, 100% of the respondents were female. The target population was exclusively female, so the questionnaire was administered to the identified female participants. When it comes to age distribution, the majority were aged between 26 and 35 years of age. Up to 19% of the participants were aged 18-25 years, 37% were between 26-30 years, 37% between 31-35 years and only 7% between 36-50 years.

Fig 4.2 Age of respondents



4.3 SECTION B:

4.3.1 Economic empowerment

When asked about how they would term economic empowerment, the respondents were shared across the three options. Up to 38% selected agency, which is an individual's ability to make and act on own choices. On the other hand, 32% selected resources to make the decision, including authority to make decisions, 30% opted for Achievements, which are the outcomes from decision making.

Table 4.3.1: Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment	Percentage
Agency, which is an individual's ability to make and act on own choices	38%
Resources to make the decision, including authority to make decisions	32%
Achievements, which are the outcomes from decision making.	30%
Total	100%

4.3.2 Essentials for economic empowerment

When asked about the essentials to social empowerment, the respondents were supposed to select three that they felt communicated best. The respondents selected autonomy with the highest frequency of 78. The others shared the remaining statistics, which included 58 for self-confidence, 51 for ability to act individually, 57 for strong social relationships and 53 for influence.

Table 4.3.2: Essentials for economic empowerment

Term	Frequency
Autonomy	78
Self confidence	58
Ability to act individually	51
Strong Social Relationships	57
Influence	53

4.3.3 Ways to achieve economic empowerment.

When asked about economic empowerment and how best is can be achieved for women, the respondents were provided with three options. Vocational training got the most mentions with a frequency of 66. Access to savings groups was at 49, microcredit had 48, income generating activities had 49, cash/asset transfers had 42 and education received 39.

Table 4.3.3: Essentials for economic empowerment

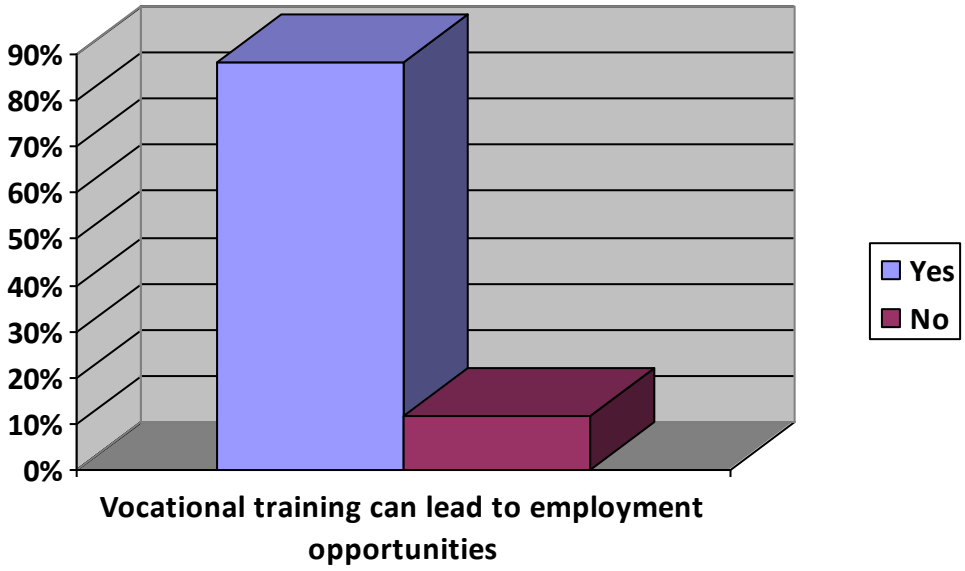
Term	Frequency
Vocational Training	66
Access to savings	49
Microcredit	48
Income generating activities	49
Cash transfers	42
Education received	39

4.4 SECTION C

4.4.1 Vocational training on employment opportunities

The respondents were asked about vocational training and if it can enable women to create employment opportunities and give them access to the job market. Up to 88% agreed with this statement while 12% refused.

Fig. 4.4.1: Vocational training on employment opportunities



4.4.2 Vocational training in socio-economic empowerment

The respondents were asked about the factors that make vocational training part of the process of women socio-economic empowerment. From the options available, 9% selected skills

development, 21% identified increased technical capacity, 35% selected life skills, 26% social support and exposure while 9% selected greater access to job market

Table 4.4.2: Vocational training in socio-economic empowerment

Factor	%
Skills development	9%
Increased technical capacity	21%
Life skills	35%
Social Support	26%
Greater access to job market	9%
Total	100%

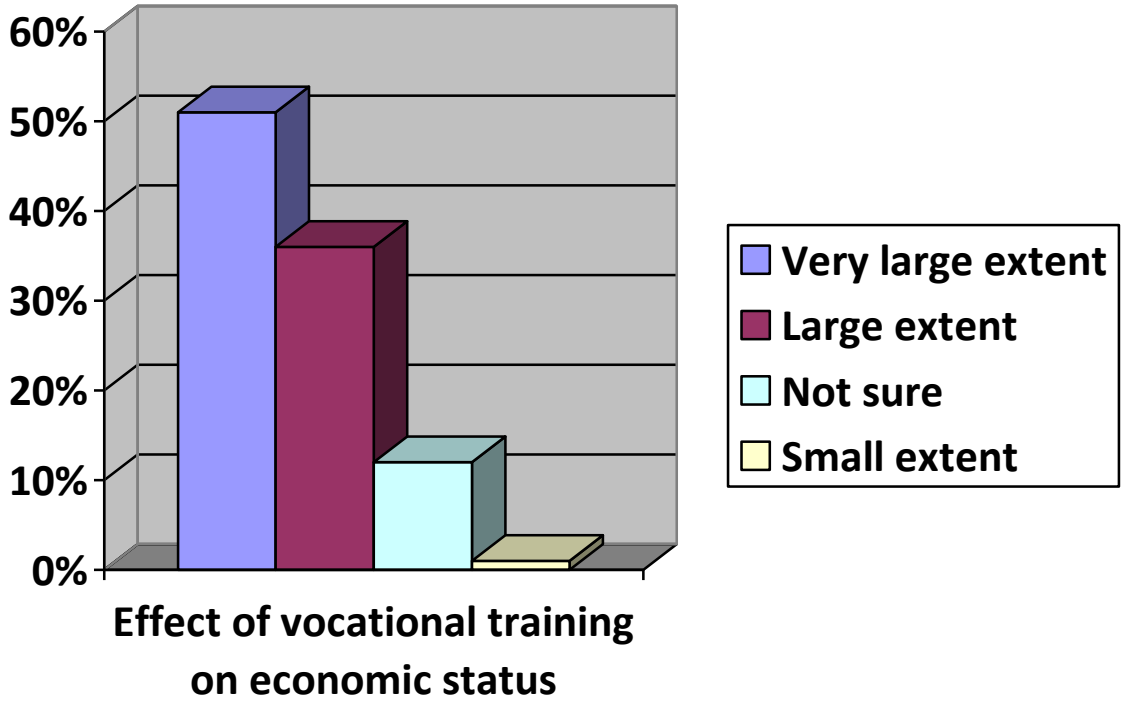
4.4.3 Vocational training

All 98 (100%) of the participants had attended a level of vocational training.

4.4.4 Effect of vocational training on economic status

The participants were asked the extent which the vocational training had changed their socio-economic status. A majority, 51% participants stated that it had changed their status to a very large extent, 36% stated that it was to a large extent, 12% said that they were not sure while only 1% felt that is was to a small extent.

Fig4.4.4: Effect of vocational training on economic status



4.4.5 Statements on position of vocational education

The questionnaire shared some statements on the position of vocational education in the process of women socio-economic empowerment. They indicated whether they agreed with it or not based on a likert scale.

(i) Girls need a route out of poverty for themselves and their families. Workforce development and employment strategies are vital in this process and have to be strategically utilized: 44% Strongly agreed, 48% Agreed, 5% were undecided, 2% disagreed and 2% Strongly disagreed.

(ii) Women require financial assistance to start their own businesses, marketable means of earning regular pay and the ability to make social and personal decisions that will have a lasting impact on their lives: 55% Strongly agreed, 40% Agree, 5% were undecided

(iii) Vocational training can transform the social fabric around women and girls because they will have better job prospects and social capital: 57% Strongly agree, 36% Agree while 6% were undecided.

(iv) Vocational training is faced with the challenge of the surrounding economic and social environment: 22% Strongly agreed, 54% Agreed, 20% were undecided, 20% Disagreed and 3% Strongly disagreed

(v) The successes of vocational training programs can only be measured based on their ability to help women acquire all the technical know-how and soft skills that will make them grow holistically as workers and individuals in society: 36% Strongly agreed, 44% Agreed, while 20% were undecided.

4.5 SECTION D:

4.5.1 Results of vocational training

When asked about the positive results when it comes to vocational training the respondents were required to select three options. The respondents responded with increased wages having 53, Employment mobility had 60, which was equal to employment opportunities which also had 60, Entrepreneurship had 66 while Social transformation had 51.

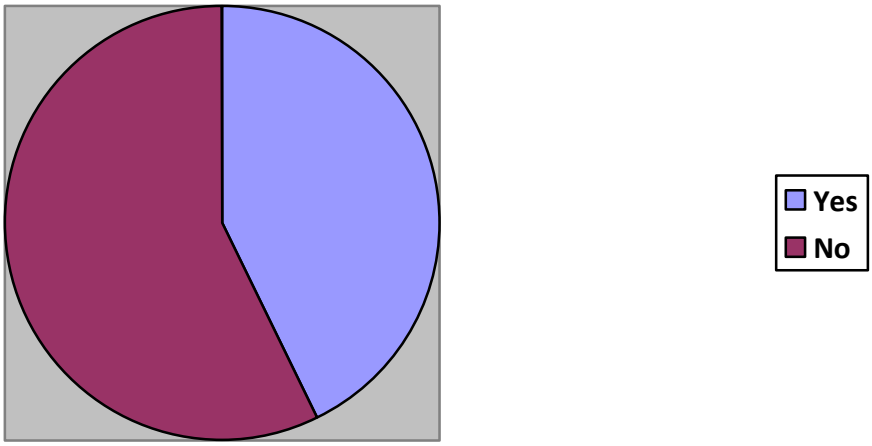
Table 4.5.1 Results of vocational training

Result	Frequency
Increased wages	53
Employment mobility	60
Employment opportunities	60
Entrepreneurship	66
Social Transformation	51

4.5.2 Personal change

The study asked the participants if they had experienced any personal change in the long and short term due to the vocational training. Up to 90% of the participants stated that they had experienced a level of change curtesy of vocational training while 10% were of the opinion that it did not make any significant change

Fig 4.5.2: Vocational training has led to personal change



4.5.3 Extent of impact of vocational training

When asked about the extent that vocational training induced personal change influence their life in the long and short term the participants were provided with five options. Up to 29% felt that it was to a very large extent. 46% stated that it was to a Large extent, 19% were not sure or do not know, 5% said that it was a small extent while 1% were of the opinion that it was to a very small extent.

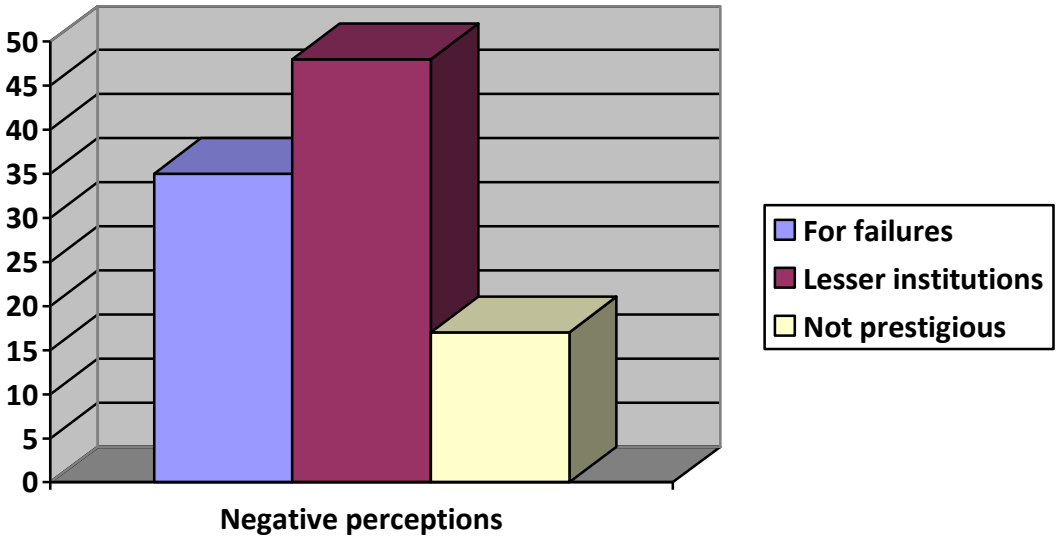
Table 4.5.3: Extent of impact of vocational training

Extent	Percentage
Very large extent	29%
Large extent	46%
Do not know	19%
Small extent	5%
Very small extent	1%
	100%

4.5.4 Negative perceptions

The participants were also asked about the common negative perceptions associated with vocational training. Up to 35% said that it is for failures, 48% felt that they are lesser institutions and 17% shared that they are not prestigious.

Fig 4.5.4: Negative perceptions



4.5.6 Statements on the overall impact on socio-economic empowerment of women.

The participants were presented with statements on the overall impact of vocational training on socio-economic empowerment of women. They indicated whether they agreed with it or not based on a likert scale.

a) Vocational training indeed provides better lives and a pathway towards positive outcomes for those involved. TVETs have been famed for transforming people: 33% Strongly agreed, 37% Agreed, 29% were undecided

b) Vocational training has enabled women to join even male dominated sectors in the economy: 42% Strongly agreed, 36% agreed, 11% were undecided while 7% disagreed and 3% Strongly disagreed.

c) The ability to choose and follow a particular path is part of the motivational and attitude change caused by learning at a vocational institution :67% Strongly agreed, 23% agreed while 8% were undecided

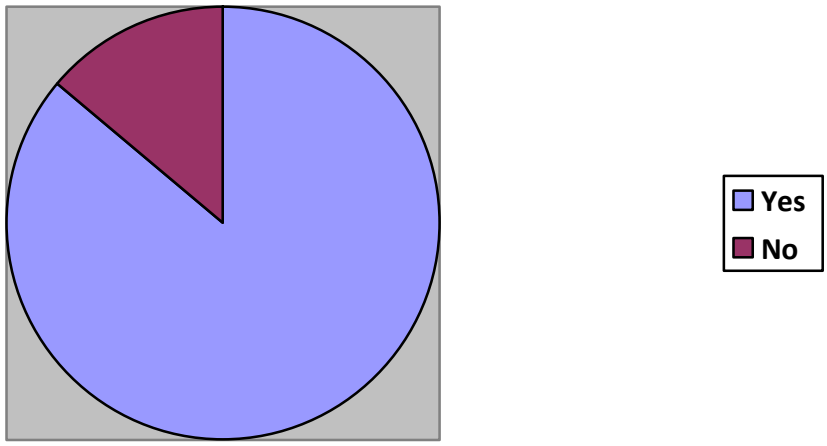
d) Women have actively engaged in formerly male dominated fields mainly due to personal preferences and future work prospects: 66% Strongly agreed 26% Agreed while 7% were undecided

4.6 SECTION E:

4.6.1 Role of advocacy in socio economic empowerment

The participants were asked whether they believed that advocacy has a role in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women especially in terms of access vocational training. Up to 86% agreed that advocacy has a role in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women especially in terms of access vocational training while 14% felt that it did not.

Fig 4.6.1 Role of advocacy in socio economic empowerment



4.6.3 Extent of Role of advocacy in socio economic empowerment

When asked about the extent to which advocacy plays a role in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women especially in access vocational training the participants gave varied reactions. Up to 57% of the participants state that it is to a Very large extent, 20% said it was to a large extent while 22% did not know.

Table 4.6.3 Extent of Role of advocacy in socio economic empowerment

Extent	Percentage
Very large extent	57%
Large extent	20%
Do not know	23%
	100%

4.6.4 Reduction of discrimination.

Discrimination has a negative effect on the lives of women and girls. The respondents identified what aspects in TVETs and the training they offer that are necessary to reduce discrimination and improve women's quality of life. Up to 21% pointed to equal pay, 31% access to education (Including vocational training), 23% Gender equality in the workplace, 15% Respect for human rights and non-discrimination, 7% Gender sensitive recruitment and 1% harassment and mistreatment of women.

Table 4.6.4 Reduction of discrimination.

Factor	Percentage %
Equal pay	21%
Access to education	31%
Gender equality	23%
Respect for human rights	16%
Gender sensitive recruitment	8%
Harassment	1%
Total	100%

4.5.5 Statements on performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women

The participants were given statements showing some of the ways of improving the performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women. They indicated whether they agreed with it or not based on a likert scale.

a) Advocacy has a role in advancing women's and girls' rights and dignity in state's policies and practices: 42% Strongly agreed, 40% Agreed while 18% were undecided.

b) There should be company supported opportunities for education and training including vocational training and business literacy where the women can use this know-how beyond the workplace: 36% Strongly agreed, 44% Agreed while 20 were undecided.

c) Programs involving vocational training also present women with mentorship opportunities: 48% Strongly agreed, 40% Agreed while 10% were undecided.

d) TVET institutions should be focused on ensuring equal training, including in male dominated fields, will result in equal pay for women and men: 53% Strongly agreed, 28% Agreed, 16% were Undecided while 2% Disagreed.

e) Gender based discrimination can only be remedied by gender sensitive recruitment and retention meaning women can train in vocational centers with the assurance that they would be able to transition into the job market: 39% Strongly agree, 37% Agreed, 4% were Undecided (4) 20 % disagreed.

4.7 Discussion of the findings

4.7.1 Effects of skills training on social economic empowerment of women.

According to Goel and Vijay (2017), girls face the challenge of financial capital. Many girls and women still struggle with the dynamics of patriarchal society where they do not have access to wealth or means to generate income. In order for change to take place there is a need for a system that gives women and girls a fair shot in the market. The findings indicate that economic empowerment entails selected agency (38%), which is an individual's ability to make and act on own choices, resources to make the decision (32%), including authority to make decisions, and achievements (30%), which are the outcomes from decision making.

Based on the findings, there are certain essentials to social empowerment. Autonomy had the highest frequency of 78. The others included 58 for Self-confidence, 51 for ability to act individually, 57 for strong social relationships and 53 for influence. This shows that, Autonomy is the most important factor when it comes to social empowerment.

In order to achieve this autonomy, there are different ways in which it can be achieved. Women require financial assistance to start their own businesses, marketable means of earning regular pay and the ability to make social and personal decisions that will have a lasting impact on their lives. Women require skills and knowledge that will enable them to actively participate in the job market either as innovators or as employees (Goel & Vijay, 2017). The findings on economic empowerment indicate that vocational training is one of the main ways of achieving this. Vocational training got the most mentions with a frequency of 66, access to savings groups was at 49, microcredit had 48, income generating activities had 49, cash/asset transfers had 42 and education received 39.

4.7.2 Impact of TVET on social economic empowerment of women

Vocational training indeed provides better lives and a pathway towards positive outcomes for those involved. TVETs have been famed for transforming people (Orlova et al., 2016). Findings indicate that indeed, the sentiment (Up to 88% agreed) was that vocational training can enable women to create employment opportunities and give them access to the job market. In countries in the EU where TVETs are an integral part of the education structures, people have credited TVET institutions with enabling people to start business and join employment (Orlova et al., 2016). The findings relate to this point are the factors that make vocational training part of the process of women socio-economic empowerment. The most important skill imparted by TVETs were selected life skills, increased technical capacity, and social support.

According to Shetty and Hans (2015), There have been many positive results of vocational training. People who opted for vocational training have shared in various studies that they experienced increased wages, employment mobility, increased employment opportunity. The findings indicate that vocational training had changed the participant's socio-economic status. A majority, 51% participants stated that it had changed their status to a very large extent, 36% stated that it was to a large extent.

The findings confirmed statements on the position of vocational education in the process of women socio-economic empowerment. The findings revealed that girls need a route out of poverty for themselves and their families. Workforce development and employment strategies are vital in this process and have to be strategically utilized. It is also true that women require financial assistance to start their own businesses, marketable means of earning regular pay and the ability to make social and personal decisions that will have a lasting impact on their lives. Further, vocational training can transform the social fabric around women and girls because they will have better job prospects and social capital. Also, vocational training is faced with the challenge of the surrounding economic and social environment. Finally, the successes of vocational training programs can only be measured based on their ability to help women acquire all the technical know-how and soft skills that will make them grow holistically as workers and individuals in society.

4.7.3 Ways of improving the performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women.

Despite the negative perception, the positive impact on women is undeniable. Vocational training has enabled women to join even male dominated sectors in the economy (Kanjilal-Bhaduri, & Pastore, 2018). Women, through vocational training, have gained technical expertise to join various trades like building and construction, engineering and motor vehicle repair. The findings indicate that positive results when it comes to vocational training include increased wages, Employment mobility, Employment opportunities, Entrepreneurship and Social transformation.
Vocational training has an impact on earnings and employment. There have been studies conducted before on the efficacy of such types of initiatives on girls in various countries (Johnson, 2015). The findings corroborate this stating that up to 90% of the participants stated that they had experienced a level of change curtesy of vocational training while 10% were of the opinion that it did not make any significant change. When asked about the extent that vocational training induced personal change influence their life in the long and short term, among the participants. 29% felt that it was to a very large extent. 46% stated that it was to a Large extent, 19% were not sure or do not know, 5% said that it was a small extent while 1% were of the opinion that it was to a very small extent.

The findings also covered some of the common negative perceptions associated with vocational training. Up to 35% said that it is for failures, 48% felt that they are lesser institutions and 17% shared that they are not prestigious. People still judge others as failures/successes based on his/her educational exploits (Sigu, 2017). Since there are very few written results, a vocational education graduate will be assumed to be a failure compared to someone who was in university and got second class honors.

The findings show that advocacy has a role in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women especially in terms of access vocational training. Advocacy to a large extent plays a role in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women especially in access vocational training. The findings also explained that discrimination has a negative effect on the lives of women and girls. The findings identified equal pay, access to education (Including vocational training), Gender equality in the workplace, Respect for human rights and non-discrimination,

and Gender sensitive recruitment as factors that TVETs use to reduce discrimination and improve women's quality of life.

The findings confirmed statements on the overall impact of vocational training on socio-economic empowerment of women. First, vocational training indeed provides better lives and a pathway towards positive outcomes for those involved. TVETs have been famed for transforming people. Vocational training has enabled women to join even male dominated sectors in the economy. The ability to choose and follow a particular path is part of the motivational and attitude change caused by learning at a vocational institution. Women have actively engaged in formerly male dominated fields mainly due to, personal preferences and future work prospects. Advocacy has a role in advancing women's and girls' rights and dignity in state's policies and practices. There should be company supported opportunities for education and training including vocational training and business literacy where the women can use this know-how beyond the workplace. Programs involving vocational training also present women with mentorship opportunities. TVET institutions should be focused on ensuring equal training, including in male dominated fields, will result in equal pay for women and men. Gender based discrimination can only be remedied by gender sensitive recruitment and retention meaning women can train in vocational centers with the assurance that they would be able to transition into the job market.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This section of the paper looks at the summary of the study which includes the purpose, problem statement objectives, literature review, methodology, data analysis and interpretation. The intended sample of the study was 114 women selected from each of the TVET institutions located in Nakuru East Town Sub-County but only 98 filled out and returning the questionnaires. This was an 86% response rate.

5.1 Summary

The main aim of the study was to understand the role of the Community vocational training centers in the wider socio-economic empowerment of women. The process depended on finding out the effects of skills training on social economic empowerment of women, examination of the impact of TVET on social economic empowerment of women and how these institutions contributed to the improvement of the performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women. The study was carried out in Nakuru Town East Sub-County. This area was selected because there are three polytechnics which source students from the larger Nakuru County and its environs. This study presented a unique look at the significance or failure of TVET in the empowerment of women. It also presented a new line of inquiry in the entire spectrum of women empowerment, especially when it comes to female participation in male dominated sectors like construction and electrical engineering. The study adopted a descripto-explanatory design. This way the detailed description comes before the final explanation. the sample of this study comprised of 114 women selected from each of the TVET institutions located in Nakuru East Town Sub-County. The study primarily depended on questionnaires to get study data.

The findings indicate that economic empowerment entails selected agency (38%), which is an individual's ability to make and act on own choices, resources to make the decision (32%), including authority to make decisions, and achievements (30%), which are the outcomes from decision making. Based on the findings there are certain essentials to social empowerment. Autonomy had the highest frequency of 78. The others included 58 for Self-confidence, 51 for

ability to act individually, 57 for strong social relationships and 53 for influence. This shows that, Autonomy is the most important factor when it comes to social empowerment.

There are different ways in which autonomy can be achieved. The findings on economic empowerment indicate that vocational training is one of the main ways of achieving this. Vocational training got the most mentions with a frequency of 66, access to savings groups was at 49, Microcredit had 48, Income generating activities had 49, Cash/Asset transfers had 42 and education received 39.

Findings indicate that indeed, the sentiment (Up to 88% agreed) was that vocational training can enable women to create employment opportunities and give them access to the job market. The findings relate to this point are the factors that make vocational training part of the process of women socio-economic empowerment. The most important skill imparted by TVETs were selected life skills, increased technical capacity, and social support. The findings indicate that vocational training had changed the participant's socio-economic status. A majority, 51% participants stated that it had changed their status to a very large extent, 36% stated that it was to a large extent.

The findings confirmed statements on the position of vocational education in the process of women socio-economic empowerment. The findings revealed that girls need a route out of poverty for themselves and their families. Workforce development and employment strategies are vital in this process and have to be strategically utilized. It is also true that women require financial assistance to start their own businesses, marketable means of earning regular pay and the ability to make social and personal decisions that will have a lasting impact on their lives. Further, vocational training can transform the social fabric around women and girls because they will have better job prospects and social capital. Also, vocational training is faced with the challenge of the surrounding economic and social environment. Finally, the successes of vocational training programs can only be measured based on their ability to help women acquire all the technical know-how and soft skills that will make them grow holistically as workers and individuals in society.

The findings indicate that positive results when it comes to vocational training include increased wages, Employment mobility, Employment opportunities, Entrepreneurship and Social transformation. The findings state that up to 90% of the participants shared that they had

experienced a level of change curtesy of vocational training while 10% were of the opinion that it did not make any significant change. When asked about the extent that vocational training induced personal change influence their life in the long and short term, among the participants. 29% felt that it was to a very large extent. 46% stated that it was to a large extent, 19% were not sure or do not know, 5% said that it was a small extent while 1% were of the opinion that it was to a very small extent.

The findings also covered some of the common negative perceptions associated with vocational training. Up to 35% said that it is for failures, 48% felt that they are lesser institutions and 17% shared that they are not prestigious. People still judge others as failures/successes based on his/her educational exploits (Sigu, 2017). Since there are very few written results, a vocational education graduate will be assumed to be a failure compared to someone who was in university and got second class honors.

The findings show that advocacy has a role in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women especially in terms of access vocational training. Advocacy to a large extent plays a role in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women especially in access vocational training. The findings also explained that discrimination has a negative effect on the lives of women and girls. The findings identified equal pay, access to education (Including vocational training), Gender equality in the workplace, Respect for human rights and non-discrimination, and Gender sensitive recruitment as factors that TVETs use to reduce discrimination and improve women's quality of life.

The findings confirmed statements on the overall impact of vocational training on socio-economic empowerment of women. First, vocational training indeed provides better lives and a pathway towards positive outcomes for those involved. TVETs have been famed for transforming people. Vocational training has enabled women to join even male dominated sectors in the economy. The ability to choose and follow a particular path is part of the motivational and attitude change caused by learning at a vocational institution. Women have actively engaged in formerly male dominated fields mainly due to, personal preferences and future work prospects. Advocacy has a role in advancing women's and girls' rights and dignity in state's policies and practices. There should be company supported opportunities for education and training including vocational training and business literacy where the women can use this

know-how beyond the workplace. Programs involving vocational training also present women with mentorship opportunities. TVET institutions should be focused on ensuring equal training, including in male dominated fields, will result in equal pay for women and men. Gender based discrimination can only be remedied by gender sensitive recruitment and retention meaning women can train in vocational centers with the assurance that they would be able to transition into the job market.

5.2 Conclusion

Overall, vocational education was designed to give people a chance at being productive members of society. Although the execution of this noble idea has suffered its fair share of disappointments and challenges, the approach cannot be faulted for what it has done for a section of the population. In Kenya, vocational education has received a much needed boost through devolved government which has given it a much needed shot in the arm. More and more young people are joining vocational training centers across the country. Even though these institutions are not as prestigious as universities and low-level colleges, they serve an important purpose in the wider scheme of things.

Women are an important demographic when it comes to the issue of vocational training. Women still lag behind their male counterpart in almost every economic and social measure. Patriarchy and cultural pressures that place motherhood and marriage above personal accomplishment have conspired to mire women in a perpetual state of disadvantage. However, things are hanging. Cultural shifts have been brought about by a general change in attitude and perception. There has been a renewed interest on the social and economic empowerment of women and girls. One means of changing the lives of women is through education. Vocational education is one of the several levels of education available for women and girls.

The study answered three questions: What is the effect of skills training on social economic empowerment of women? What is the overall impact of TVET on social economic empowerment of women? What are some of the ways of improving the performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women? The questions posed to the participant's center around these topics and provide a look into the issues surrounding vocational training and the empowerment of young women along with their families. The conclusions were drawn along these questions to see if the findings confirm or dispel them.

The first question was, what is the effect of skills training on social economic empowerment of women? When women attend vocational training, they gain skills. These skills provide them with access to employment opportunities. These employment opportunities give them access to their own funds. Having their own funds leads them to agency, which is an individual's ability to make and act on own choices. They also have access to resources to make the decision, including authority to make decisions. Finally, when they have access to finance, agency and decision making they are bound to have achievements which are the outcomes from decision making. For women to enjoy social and economic empowerment they need autonomy, self-confidence, ability to act individually, strong social relationships and influence.

Out of all these factors, autonomy is the most crucial. Women, therefore, require autonomy before any other factor. Personal autonomy is the capacity to decide for oneself and pursue a course of action in one's life, often regardless of any particular moral content. Women are often subjected to several levels of leadership in their own family that diminish their autonomy from a young age. Their fate is decided by their parents, spouse even societal pressures from other women. If all these negative forces are eliminated, a woman who is in control of her own fate is likely to grow and reach new heights.

There are different ways in which autonomy can be achieved. The study has ascertained that vocational training provides a portal to autonomy. It cannot be used in isolation though. Other approaches can also be adopted including access to savings groups, Microcredit, Income generating activities, Cash/Asset transfers and increased education opportunities. It is not uncommon for an individual to seek a university degree after vocational training. Therefore vocational training can enable women to seek employment opportunities which, in turn, provides them with increased access to the job market. This is a positive change. The change was evidenced by those who were a part of the study. The respondents all agreed that it vocational training had changed their socio-economic status.

The second question was, what is the overall impact of TVET on social economic empowerment of women? The study ascertained that vocational training provides positive outcomes especially in the lives of women and girls. They get to enjoy increased wages, employment mobility, employment opportunities, entrepreneurship and social transformation. Those who had attended vocational training transformed their lives to a great extent. It also had a massive influence on

how they got to live their lives. It is quite apparent that vocational training has some tangible impact on the lives of women and girls. This impact then seeps into the families and social networks of these women. The knock-on effect presents an important boost to the community which means that vocational training may benefit society as a whole especially lo income areas.

The third question asked was, what are some of the ways of improving the performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women? One aspect that must be addressed is the issue of perception. Vocational training centers are still subject to negative perceptions where people think that they are "lesser" institutions. The vocational centers need to shed the label that they are for failures, that they are lesser institutions and that they are not prestigious enough. Improvement can also come through advocacy. Advocacy to a large extent plays a role in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women especially in access vocational training. Advocacy is one way to eliminate and reduce discrimination and other harmful practices that people encounter that may hinder their progress. Equal pay, access to education (Including vocational training), gender equality in the workplace, respect for human rights and non-discrimination, and gender sensitive recruitment lead to a reduction to discrimination and improve women's quality of life.

5.3 Recommendations

From the conclusion, there are several recommendations that were realized. One recommendation is that there should be an increase in the number of vocational centers. There was an increase in enrollment in schools when free primary education was introduced in Kenya. This increase means that there is a wider pool available for the vocational centers for individuals who drop out or fail to transition into high school. A majority of Kenyans live in low-income neighborhoods and low-income areas. These people need alternatives for their children in cases where they cannot afford to complete the educational cycle. Vocational centers present an avenue that they can use to better their lives.

Another recommendation is to increase the quality of centers. Most of the centers visited in the course of the study are not in good shape. Many have fallen into a state of disrepair. There were those that have been renovated by the county government, but the upgrades were largely cosmetic. There are other needs that the centers had that remain largely ignored by the authorities. These vocational centers have a vital role in the lives of young people especially

women who may be in need of skills that may grant them financial freedom and means to take care of their families.

Even though they are devolved, there should be national level vocational centers. The national government needs to set up its own vocational centers that may serve as referral points for students who may wish to advance. This may be necessary so that the government can inspire the students at the community level to work hard. The national level centers do not need to be too many. They can be distributed based on the now defunct provinces. The government can set up one for each region. These regional centers can, with time, be upgraded to colleges that accept certifications from lower level vocational centers.

The findings show that there is a need for a vocational policy for women at these centers. Women stand to benefit from vocational training, especially those in rural areas and low income settlements. Women in these environments are vulnerable and are less likely to access opportunities and chances that their male counterparts do. A policy should be instituted that would get more of them to enroll and ensures that they complete their education. The policy could include tax waivers for materials that are being used in vocational centers. It may also include subsidies and reduced tuitions fees.

The government needs to look into creating a link with higher education levels. Vocational centers are viewed as lower tier institutions. As the same time, many people believe that these vocational centers are a dead end. In order to get more people to join vocational centers there is a need to provide an avenue to join college or university. Certificates from such institutions should help someone to graduate to a new level of education. At the end of the day they need to find a way to be better off.

One of the challenges when it comes to vocational education is the fact that there is negative sentiment when it comes to these institutions. Therefore, county governments need to carry out campaigns to change perceptions. HIV attracted so much stigma until the government campaign changed people's mind. It is possible to carry out such a turnaround when it comes to the issue of stigma against vocational centers. When people get to see how important they are then enrolment is bound to increase. A government campaign increased the number of people joining the National Youth service. It is therefore possible to do so when it comes to vocational training.

Vocational training is just part of a wider system. The young men and women who attend these institutions must be linked to mentors who will guide them into the various fields meant for their newfound skills. Therefore, it is important to establish structures where the students can be linked with mentors who will give them a much-needed push. The informal sector in Kenya depends on word of mouth and familiarity. A mentor who it well known and established will present these young people with a chance to build up their understanding and open up the market for them.

There is a need to establish minimum standards for vocational institutions. Since counties are running them there is a risk that some areas will have low level facilities while others will have high level institutions. It is therefore necessary for the national government, through the ministry of education to institute minimum standards because these institutions need a level of uniformity if the benefits are to be felt nationwide. The ministry can carry out follow ups and coordinate with the country level structures to ensure that these rules are followed in the short and long term.

5.4 Suggestions for future study

This study did not cover all the issues pertaining to economic empowerment of women and vocational education. The study was mainly limited to Nakuru. It may be necessary to replicate this study at a national level. This will elaborate on the findings of this study and possible add to the body of knowledge even further. There may be other challenges linked to this that may be present at the national level. It is also possible that the vocational centers in rural areas may be doing better than those on urban areas like Nakuru. Finding out the differences and similarities may be useful.

There may be a need to compare the impact of vocational training and those of colleges that offer similar services. Lately, colleges have sprung up, offering courses and skills training that could have been at the vocational level. They offer training at a fee and are more organized than vocational centers. These colleges have gained prominence and traction across the country because they have responded to the gap left by vocational centers. They offer courses on hairdressing, fashion and design among other, low level skills that should be the preserve of vocational centers. There may be a need to compare these two similar institutions to see which one has a greater impact on the lives of women and girls.

There may be a need to look at the financial implications of these trainings for both men and women. People invest heavily in university courses because of the possible benefits that they may accrue once they are employed. Many people go into debt and spend a lot of money to ensure that their children graduate. There may be a need to look at the financial benefits of investing in vocational education. Are the outputs too far apart? This may be an interesting inquiry. It may explain why education in colleges and universities has much higher value than in vocational centers.

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APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTION LETTER

Date

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN DATA COLLECTION

My name is Esther Awour Ogema, a student at St. Paul's University. I am undertaking a research on the role of the Community vocational training centers in the wider socio-economic empowerment of women. The research study is purely for academic purposes and all information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality and integrity. Your participation will be appreciated. Note that you can withdraw consent at any time and you are under no obligation to participate in the study, meaning you will suffer no negative implications for withdrawing.

Thanks in advance

Yours sincerely

Esther Ogema.

Appendix II: QUESTIONAIRE

My name is Esther Awour Ogema, a student at St. Paul's University. I am undertaking a research on the role of the Community vocational training centers in the wider socio-economic empowerment of women. The research study is purely for academic purposes and all information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality and integrity. I kindly request you to fill the questionnaire correctly. Tick appropriately where there are options, and for questions without options, please fill in your responses in the spaces provided.

SECTION A: Personal Background Information.

1. Gender:

a) Male ☐ b) Female ☐

2. What is your age bracket?

a) 18-25 years ☐ b) 26-30 years ☐ c) 31-35 years ☐ d) 36-50 years ☐

SECTION B: Socio Economic Empowerment

1. What would you term as key to "empowerment"? (Choose one)

a) Agency, which is an individual's ability to make and act on own choices. ☐

b) Resources to make the decision, including authority to make decisions ☐

c) Achievements, which are the outcomes from decision making ☐

2. What do you believe is essential to social empowerment? (Choose three)
   a) Autonomy ☐
   b) Self confidence ☐
   c) Ability to act individually ☐
   d) Strong social relationships ☐
   e) Influence ☐

3. Economic empowerment is the ability to make and act on decisions that involve the control over and allocation of financial resources. Which ways do you think are best suited for it to be achieved, especially for women? (Choose three)
   a) Vocational training ☐
   b) Access to savings groups ☐
   c) Microcredit ☐
   d) Income generating activities ☐
   e) Cash/Asset transfers ☐
   f) Education ☐

SECTION C: What is the effect of skills training on social economic empowerment of women?

1. Do you believe that vocational training can enable women to create employment opportunities and give them access to the job market?
   a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
2. What are some of the factors that make vocational training part of the process of women socio-economic empowerment?
   a) Skills development ☐
   b) Increased technical capacity ☐
   c) Life skills ☐
   d) Social support and exposure ☐
   e) Greater access to job market ☐
3. Have you received vocational training?
   a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
4. If yes, to what extent has the vocational training affected your socio economic status as a woman?

   a) Very large extent ☐ b) Large extent ☐ c) Do not know ☐

   d) Small extent ☐ e) Very small extent ☐

5. Which challenges did you face in the process of seeking and receiving vocational training? (Name at least one, maximum of three)

……

……

……

……

5. The following are some of the statements on the position of vocational education in the process of women socio-economic empowerment. Using the key below, tick where appropriate to indicate your level of agreement with the statements.

   1) Strongly agree (2) Agree (3) Undecided (4) Disagree (5) Strongly disagree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
(i) Girls need a route out of poverty for themselves and their families. Workforce development and employment strategies are vital in this process and have to be strategically utilized.					
(ii) Women require financial assistance to start their own businesses, marketable means of earning regular pay and the ability to make social and personal decisions that will have a lasting impact on their lives.					
(iii) vocational training can transform the social fabric around women and girls because they will have better job prospects and social capital.					
(iv) Vocational training is faced with the challenge of the surrounding economic and social environment.					
(v.) The successes of vocational training programs can only be measured based on their ability to help women acquire all the technical know-how and soft skills that will make them grow holistically as workers and individuals in society.					

SECTION D: What is the overall impact of vocational training on socio-economic empowerment of women?

1. What are some of the positive results when it comes to vocational training? (Choose 3)
   a) Increased wages ☐ b) Employment mobility ☐
   c) Employment opportunities ☐ d) Entrepreneurship ☐
   e) Social transformation ☐
   f) Other ☐ …….

2. Did vocational training produce personal change in you in the long and short term?

   a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

3. If yes, to what extent did vocational training induced personal change influence your life in the long and short term?

   a) Very large extent ☐ b) Large extent ☐ c) Do not know ☐
   d) Small extent ☐ e) Very small extent ☐

4. What are some of the negative social perceptions when it comes to vocational training?

a) It is for failures ☐

b) They are lesser institutions ☐

c) They are not prestigious ☐

d) Other (State) ☐ ……

5. The following are some of the statements on the overall impact of vocational training on socio-economic empowerment of women. Using the key below, tick where appropriate to indicate your level of agreement with the statements.

   1) Strongly agree (2) Agree (3) Undecided (4) Disagree (5) Strongly disagree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
a) Vocational training indeed provides better lives and a pathway towards positive outcomes for those involved. TVETs have been famed for transforming people					
b) Vocational training has enabled women to join even male dominated sectors in the economy					
c) The ability to choose and follow a particular path is part of the motivational and attitude change caused by learning at a vocational institution					
d) Women have actively engaged in formerly male dominated fields mainly due to, personal preferences and future work prospects.					

SECTION E: What are some of the ways of improving the performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women?

1. Do you think advocacy has a role in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women especially in terms of access vocational training?
   a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
2. If yes, to what extent does advocacy play a role in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women especially in access vocational training
   a) Very large extent ☐ b) Large extent ☐ c) Do not know ☐
   d) Small extent ☐ e) Very small extent ☐

3. Discrimination has a negative effect on the lives of women and girls. In what aspects is TVETs and the training they offer necessary to reduce discrimination and improve women's quality of life?

   a) Equal pay ☐

   b) Access to education (Including vocational training) ☐

   c) Gender equality in the workplace ☐

d) Respect for human rights and non-discrimination ☐

e) Gender sensitive recruitment ☐

f) Harassment and mistreatment of women ☐

4. The following are some of the statements showing how some of the ways of improving the performance of TVET on social economic empowerment of women Using the key below, tick where appropriate to indicate your level of agreement with the statements.

1) Strongly agree (2) Agree (3) Undecided (4) Disagree (5) Strongly disagree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
a) Advocacy has a role in advancing women's and girls' rights and dignity in state's policies and practices					
b) There should be company supported opportunities for education and training including vocational training and business literacy where the women can use this know-how beyond the workplace					
c) Programs involving vocational training also present women with mentorship opportunities.					
d) TVET institutions should be focused on ensuring equal training, including in male dominated fields, will result in equal pay for women and men.					
e) Gender based discrimination can only be remedied by gender sensitive recruitment and retention meaning women can train in vocational centers with the assurance that they would be able to transition into the job market					

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12th September 2017

Esther Awuor Ogema

BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Student number: 1525/17

Dear Esther,

RE: **DISSERTATION SUPERVISION, 2017/2018 ACADEMIC YEAR**

Congratulations for completing the first year of coursework in your postgraduate studies. The board of postgraduate studies has approved your dissertation concept which is entitled: *'The role of community based vocational training centre on women socio-economic empowerment'*. **Dr. Zablon Bundi** has been appointed as the lead supervisor, and **Dr. Macmillan Kiiru** as the co-supervisor for your research and they shall guide you as you write your dissertation. The supervision is to commence on **12th September 2017.** Kindly note the following as you carry out your research:

(i) You will first contact the lead supervisor who will then forward the work to the co-supervisor for additional input/ advice.
(ii) The role of the supervisors is to guide you in writing the proposal, doing the research, and writing the whole dissertation in accordance with the terms laid down in the dissertation handbook
(iii) You should agree with your supervisors on the most appropriate supervision schedule and process
(iv) Ensure that your supervisors fill in the supervisor's form and submit a copy to the postgraduate office
(v) You are expected to follow the procedures laid down in the dissertation handbook if you are dissatisfied with the supervision process
(vi) Supervision meetings should not take place in private premises.
(vii) It is your responsibility to ensure that you defend your research proposal in your department. Consult the HOD for the appropriate date to do so.
(viii) Constantly refer to the dissertation handbook in all matters pertaining to the dissertation.
(ix) Your proposal and final dissertation must be processed through turn it in. Open an account with the help of the ICT department in your campus then get log in details from your supervisor.
(x) The deadline for submitting your proposal is **28th February 2018**.

The complete dissertation should be handed in on or before **31st May 2018**. the postgraduate studies office will send you a softcopy of the dissertation handbook for use. (update the office of your current email and telephone address).

We wish you all the best as you do your research.

Regards,

Dr. Sammy Githuku

Director, Postgraduate Studies

copy: DVC- Academics

Supervisor

Dean, FOSS

Head of Department

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

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This is to Certify that Miss.. Esther Awour Ogema of St. Paul's University, has been licensed to conduct research in Nakuru on the topic: THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY BASED VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTERS IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN NAKURU TOWN for the period ending : 13/April/2021.

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