



Acceptability of Vocational training as a social protection mechanism by young mothers in vocational training centers in Alego Usonga Sub County, Kenya

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Abstract: To achieve a flourishing and dynamic economy for our ally nation as well the capable mass of workforce is a must to ensure a healthy competitive development. The need for technical skills forms a critical solution that make the country's agenda development possible. This study sought to examine the acceptability of Vocational training as a social protection mechanism by young mothers in vocational training centers in Alego Usonga Sub County. The study was guided by the Consumer demand theory. The focal subjects were 248 young females aged between fifteen to twenty years, attending seven vocational training institutions in the Alego Usonga Sub-County. Descriptive survey designs and mixed methods approach were used in this study. A sample size of 112 women respondents were realized using the Yamane Taro formula. To recruit the respondents, this study used a fusion of Snowball sampling and simple random sampling techniques simultaneously. Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical techniques with the help of SPSS V. Qualitative data was thematically analyzed using verbatim. Data was later summarized and triangulated with the quantitative data. From the findings, majority of courses from the seven TVET institutions were undertaken by women aged between 25-25 years. A significant number of women believed that, there is a high demand for technical courses in the job market. On acceptability of TVET programs, community norms impact on the training access by a good number of women. It was concluded that, the level of skills competition in TVET courses is crucial in shaping the demand for these courses. A significant proportion of young mothers attending technical and vocational training colleges in the AlegoUsonga sub-county strongly believe that there is a high demand for technical courses in the job market crucial in enabling their social protection mechanisms. Recommendations on improving acceptability of TVET programs were suggested to the local and National governments.

Key terms: Acceptability of TVET, Social protection, women, skills, development

1.1 Background of the study

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labor Organization (ILO), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) refers to “aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and

knowledge relating to occupants in various sectors of economic and social life" (UNESCO and ILO, 2001). Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) encompass a wide range of methods that cater to various demographics, spanning from young children in primary school to adults. It can be delivered in both formal and informal settings, and the services can be offered by public, private, and non-governmental organizations (Powell, 2016). Technical and vocational education is widely prevalent worldwide and continues to evolve daily. This form of education is distinguished by a wide array of terms, including apprenticeship training that encompasses vocational education and training (VET), career and technical education (CTE), and workforce education. These terms have been developed to establish standards for regional governance.

The pressure of global economic competition is continuously rising, necessitating the presence of a trained technical workforce with a diverse range of intermediate-level technical and professional abilities. To ensure the growth and progress of our economy, it is crucial to have a substantial number of highly trained and competent workers who can compete effectively. Therefore, possessing technical skills is crucial to determining the development priorities that may be widely embraced by the nation. TVET gained popularity in the United States in the latter part of the 19th century. The vocational education program included subjects such as industrial training, bookkeeping, stenography (shorthand), fine arts, and commercial labor. The courses were provided at both private educational institutions and public schools. During the emergence of American culture, vocational schools such as Copper Union, Tuskegee Institute, and Pratt Institute played a significant role.

According to Kirchberger (2019), by 2018, the Western European countries had a TVET crisis that was undergoing massive reorganization which in France included departmental and other regions' training centers conversion into regional centers. Even the likes of Germany are believed to have always been seen as an epitome of TVET that was closely tailored-made for the demands and requirement setter is under a cloud (Kirchberger, 2018). Other challenges that have come with Spain are the growing population of TVET graduates who work under very adverse conditions and even when they get other formal contracts, especially after temporary ones or part-time jobs only. The system of TVET is regulated by both the official and non-formal means of learning. The system that is deemed to be formal consists of secondary schools, polytechnics and colleges. The non-formal sector comprises the orientation stage, pre-employment training and job training, and apprenticeships (Government of India 2017). TVET in India is characterized by low wages, and as Agrawal (2018) puts it, 'This education system known as TVET is thought to be a substandard form of education for the poor and undereducated citizens that are not qualified to attend higher learning institutions.' It is a considerable challenge especially after one completes an area from an institution offering this type of TVET graduates are being taken to be the last but de-facto, according to Agrawal (2018), employers opt for high school finishers and those from universities than TVETs.

Without clear consistency, lack of delivery in the TVET sector in Africa to bridge the labor-skill gap can be offered by various private and public institutes' colleges as well as vocational schools or through apprentice training. It also has a poor image in sub-Saharan Africa as being 'women and learners who perform badly'; nearly two-thirds of all TVET students are women across many countries including Ghana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Senegal (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2016). According to Kirchberger (2018), the DBI TVET situation in Africa is uncoordinated, unregulated and very fragmented, yet low-

quality training among many aspects of obsolete teaching material and equipment accompanied by gender geographical as well as economic inequality.

In Uganda, TVET is particularly pertinent as a strategy to address the shortage of skills. Lucas et al (2018) argue that the beneficial impact of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is apparent by default. The BTVET Strategic Plan, also known as 'Skilling Uganda', acknowledges the fact that traditional training programs, which are focused on supplying knowledge and are centered around academia, are failing to equip graduates with the necessary competencies and skills demanded by the current labor market. The plan recognizes that BTVET, which involves quickly grasping ideas, information, work systems, and contexts, needs to address this issue.

The cultivation of human capital by people facilitates an enhanced quality of life and is thus seen as a means to elevate a nation's level of living (Gomis Garcia & Fares, 2018; The World Bank Group, 2019). Education is therefore seen as a necessary component of the empowerment process due to its significant role in the creation of self-confidence and is thus considered an instrumental part of health improvement initiatives (Republic of Kenya, 1998). However, although the Kampen academic sphere drastically grew after the country gained independence in many aspects and for many decades, its quality and level of education that produces intelligent competent supported students qualified for a rewarding career have been hotly criticized (Sibiya, 2018). People from different societies led differently. In the sense that, cultures are very different they significantly contribute to a society. In the day-to-day life of a people, their cultural practices formulate how they will be identified as a community on its own. Things which unite the people of a community include the culture they practice, including methods used in their day-to-day life, celebrations and festivals they take part in, body coverings or dressing code for sexes, kind and variety of food available to them as well as cultural values governing lives of men.

One of these other socio-economic factors that affect the consumption of TVET is parental education. Studies go ahead to suggest that if parents did either secondary or form four, there is a high likelihood of their completing schooling. Another way of pinpointing that the occupational type, or skill level, of parents influences their children's degree is suggested (Curtis & McMillan, 2018). On the other hand, Kilpatrick et al (2002) argue without any striking significance, parental education levels do not correlate with occupational status which may be a result of the lack of opportunities presented by the rural job market and their being non-schooled Parents. Socio-cultural forces are those that govern large-scale societies and cultures, meaning their thoughts behavior and emotional patterns. Socio-cultural elements include several aspects such as language, legal systems, aesthetics, religion, ethnic values, attitudes, social institutions, family dynamics, and the process of child-rearing to achieve complete societal integration (Free Psychology Newsletter, 2018). These challenges can eventually be a very crucial thing to any nation; this is because such nations will need to target their promotions as dictated by the socio-cultural dynamics. The socio-cultural theorist also contends that people cannot be viewed all by themselves without regarding their society and historical background. Thus, it does make sense to investigate the society and development that emerges in a given time and place (Sankale 2019).

These relationships that is intrinsic to families such as those between family members or child and parent, and those with outsiders commonly known as beyond the household are very powerful determinants of pathways during growth. There are several direct and indirect ways in which family members can

influence their children's social development including isolation from parents, peer pressure, conflict with other people in the neighborhood etc. The package of social skills and resources family members bring to bear most directly on their children are those that occur day-to-day inside the home: affection, an age-root utility for the learning and development, staying safe from harm and cleanliness of the house, a lot of interaction between parents' children and good parental control over child activity has a positive effect on the child. The situation of the TVET among young mothers is wanting since most of them aren't able to acquire learning because of the level of acceptability of the programs. This study purposed to examine the acceptability of Vocational training as a social protection mechanism by young mothers in vocational training centers in Alego Usonga Sub County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Through education and training, women get the opportunity to join the professional labor market of highly skilled jobs also known as gender-specific labor – for example, engineering. In its reference (UNESCO, 2016), is also noted that the levels of access to post-school education for women have been growing on a global scale. Students usually lack knowledge of the details that define specific occupations but research developed an understanding of role models as an integral part of the career choice decision-making process (Gibson 2014; De Santis and Quimby, 2014; Quimby and Desantis IOM, Nauta Kokaly, 20II). This warrants the extension and popularization of TVET so that women could take their place at the table on equal terms. This has not been the reality though since women are generally disadvantaged in STEM training provided in TVET systems (UNESCO, 2019; Leathwood, 2016). As per Foster (2020), social, cultural, political as well as economic factors have proved to be the source of women's access and participation in TVET. Women who opened opportunities to have a train that was relevant to women's empowerment. While in recent years, there was an improvement regarding the inclusion of women into TVET; still a male-oriented type of behavior is still prevalent in African cultural surroundings (Foster, 2021).

Yegon (2016) conducted a significant study on enhancing the potential of young people by improving the quality of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Kenya. This study used a questionnaire-based approach to gather essential data to stimulate discussion on strategies to improve Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Kenya. Additionally, it attempted to offer a model for the effective implementation of high-quality TVET. The study was looking at a centrally controlled TVET system from the perspective that if not carefully organized, results in curriculum development that is unable to meet needs disabled with diversification. It could be argued that, lack of general acceptability of TVET program poses a threat to social protection of women's opportunities in Alego Usonga Sub County. Scanty documentation of evidence with respect to this phenomenon exists in the study area. This study, therefore, emanates from the backdrop that primarily seeks to investigate the acceptability level of technical and vocational skills as a social protection mechanism by young mothers in vocational training centers in Alego Usonga Sub County

1.3 Study Objective

This study purposed to examine the acceptability of Vocational training as a social protection mechanism by young mothers in vocational training centers in Alego Usonga Sub County.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is expected to be of great significance to the following stakeholders: The research was aimed at providing the right information not only to justice (rights) makers or management youth polytechnic so that they could make positive decisions based on concrete founded on their need and maintain a deserving lifestyle for the young mothers. The latter was instrumental in theoretical and practical development; that is acquisition of the ‘best practice’, which became a benchmark used in organizational problem-solving. It thus builds a connection between demands for TVET concerning youth polarization. The polytechnics, primarily in Kenya will be the main beneficiary of this event and as a result, their programs are likely to face increased demand while they enjoy better organizational coordination management skills. It also offers information paths for future studies by the researcher and other interested scholars.

1.5 The Conceptual framework

Independent variable

Dependent variable

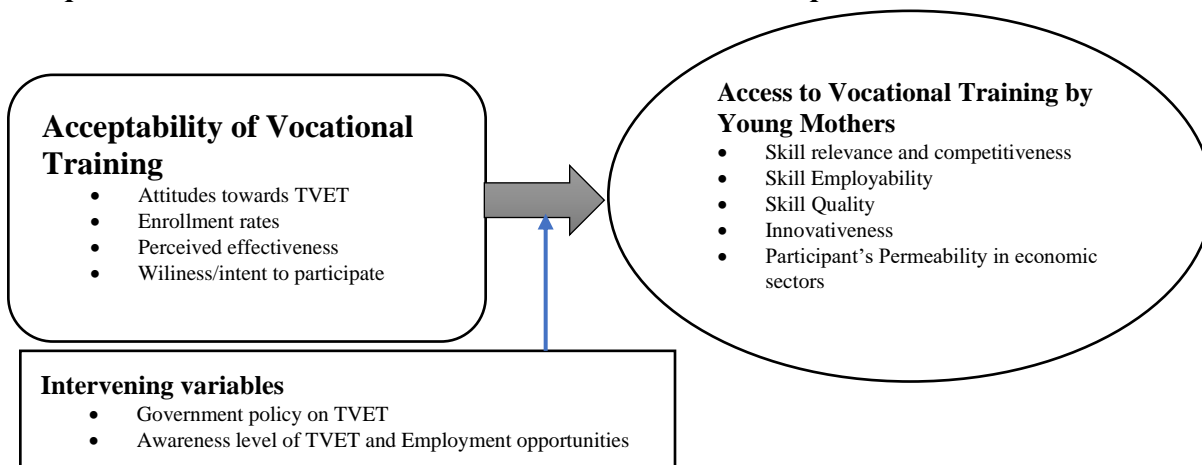


Figure 1: The Conceptual framework

Source: Own Conceptualization, 2023

1.6 Literature review

In this section, critical review of theory guiding this study and empirical review of related literature are presented.

1.6.1 Critical review of theory guiding the study - Consumer demand theory

Consumer demand theory has sent us a glimpse of an understanding that market demand is based on and scholars nowadays build upon this knowledge with modern microeconomics. Particularly, this theory focuses on consumers’ behavior specifically market purchases as what results in satisfaction are wants and needs that are utility from consuming a product or good. The idea that market demand is dependent on the fulfillment of wants and needs constitutes one of the pillars on which analysis of markets within economics stands since at least the early writings of Adam Smith in 1776. On the contrary, scientists

currently working in a progression from the late 1700s to the late and scholarly' committed whole areas of theoretical consumer demand development offer a great deal of formula.

Mondache was right when he linked consumer demand theory to Pigou (1910) who believed that the response of a commodity's demand to price changes should be related to its response to income variations (Mondache, 2005). Houthakker (1960) effectively reciprocated the suggestion by Friedman (1957), and this has concurrently skyrocketed in demand theory to become what is popularly known as the neoclassical theory of consumer choice (Fishburn, 1988). It is in that realization of this that the theory demands demand to be defined as the quantity of goods sold at one point and time with the current price and date. Demand is price responsive and therefore depending on the item itself, demand from perception of prices pervaded by that very production; income clarity as well other commodities' price influences; preference or familiarity. Jeremy Bentham – this is the first proponent to develop significant advancements for the development of consumer demand theory at the end of the eighteenth century. It was he who had used the term utility about the satisfaction of demands and needs. He also conceptualized that an individual acts because he or she wants to get the highest utility attainable. Bentham, in his wholehearted belief, believed that utility was a relatively and objectively measurable personal property like stature or body weight; it was neither vague nor confusing (Burns & Hart, 2017). Mill, who was one of the leading intellectual figures of his time and a famous writer, developed Bentham's work further and made it more popular in several publications including (Mill, 2017) *Principles of Political Economy* which remained the most important textbook for economics for at least several decades.

On the other sense demand theory also has its disadvantages since it focuses on only analysis of answers to monetary situations making the theory's basis appealing to other relevant social scientists. Behavioral theory is usually concerned with a political scientist, sociologist or anthropologist where the non-monetary phenomena do not predominate over all aspects of behavior. Therefore, the other fields rarely rely on an economist's theory of choice. It is no surprise that this approach relied so greatly on quoted prices of money, and ascribed a large part to the unquestionable variability in perverted closures. Indeed, it is surprising to understand how such a theory manages to still survive as an integral part of mainstream economics. Similarly to how models may survive in the absence of other justifiable more efficient others, theories suffice as well whenever the inefficiency involved is an absolute value.

In this study, economic theory is relevant because it assesses consumer behavior particularly market purchases driven by utility developed from the use of a good/service where TVET under any pretense that youth can be set ablaze are services required by the consumer. The utility of the TVET defines this youth demand for it. Utility or preference orderings are considered to be direct rankings of bundles of characteristics, treating basic goods/services indirectly as collections rated entirely based on their characteristic contents. This research utilizes demand theory to examine the variables that affect the youth's demand for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). It assumes that the youth's desire for TVET is impacted by the training fee charged by TVET institutions, as well as other factors such as the training fees charged by other tertiary institutions and income levels. This indicates that the theory we are discussing is relevant since the variables that we investigated in our research are accurately represented by a theory of demand.

1.6.2 Empirical review

Acceptability of Vocational training and Access to Vocational Training by Young Mothers

The work of Raju van Kidane (2016) thus investigated the Entrepreneurial motivation and determinant factors influencing the decision to engage in self-Employments Amounting TVET graduate students. A study was carried out based on a proportional stratified sampling technique and applied a self-administered questionnaire survey of one hundred and ninety-four sample size from sixteen other departments of TVET students at Mekelle public institution. It was found that most of the respondents were likely to become entrepreneurs and this drive came from their relatives, business media, merchants, and scholars in these businesses, as well as courses taken in entrepreneurship. The study established that academics have a considerable responsibility in motivating even more students to turn into entrepreneurs by creating an awareness of the advantages harnessed from the adoption of entrepreneurship and ultimately leading the growth of the economics of countries as well as global competitiveness. Redeuilhomme (2014) and Sujon et al. (2013) conducted their studies on India, a state in which the economic policy towards the development of youth is different from that of Kenya hence this study was carried out among the Kenyan population.

Sankale (2019) conducted a study on the factors influencing the demand for technical and vocational training among the young in Kajiado County. The research used a mixed-method approach, including both qualitative and quantitative features throughout the investigation. Data was gathered via empirical enrollment numbers obtained through the use of a standardized formula, followed by in-depth interviews on their study habits and attitudes towards TVET. A sample size of 119 was obtained from the population described above using the stratified random sampling technique. This survey was done on the complete student population enrolled at youth polytechnics in Kajiado County. The program only focused on students enrolled at polytechnic institutions. The production of projections does not have any impact on the demand for TVET programs in any region. All differences identified in the research results as predictors have an impact on their consumption. However, the findings of the hypothesis test revealed a significant positive link between the competitiveness of skills, socio-economic status, household attitudes, social networking, and the consumption of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) by youth in Kajiado. Although this research presents significant data, its primary objective is to examine a specific problem that affects all young individuals, with a particular emphasis on adolescent moms.

In 2016, Yegon did a study on the potential tapping of producing high-quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to contribute to discussions on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Kenya. The second research approach used was a desk-based study, entailing a thorough examination of policy papers from the state and strategic studies at TVET institutions. The research demonstrated that the persistent issue of insufficient funding may be effectively addressed by engaging influential individuals from outside the TVET industry to provide financial support for TVET. Subsequently, the debate put forward several ideas that need to be executed to augment TVET. Additionally, it highlighted concerns that should be taken into account to raise the efficiency, quality, equality, and relevance of TVET. Without proper organization, a centrally-coordinated TVET system is unlikely to succeed, since it may lead to the development of inappropriate programs that fail to address diverse requirements. The research, although providing valuable findings

on the investigated issue, should be acknowledged for its use of governmental progress indicators since 2016. However, it is important to examine the necessity for more recent data.

In 2015, Yewah did research on the institutional determinants that influence the quality of training in Technical, Vocational, and Entrepreneurship Training. The study was done specifically in Siaya Sub-County, which is located within the Siaya area. The research aimed to investigate the influence of 34 training programs on the physical facilities in TVET and industrial skills. It also aimed to determine the extent to which the skills acquired during the training were used during the attachment period. Additionally, the study examined the courses given by the training programs and the skills that were utilized. The study used a descriptive research survey method, with a sample size of 2 principals selected by random selection from the pool of respondents. Additionally, three instructors chose to withdraw from the study. The primary conclusion of this study was that instructors need to be well compensated in terms of job benefits. Additionally, it was found that longer workshops with suitable equipment and facilities are necessary. The key challenge that must be resolved to attain genuine work autonomy is the necessity to provide enrolled educators with contemporary market-relevant skills, augmented government assistance through scholarships and/or specific grants, and the incorporation of additional instructors or increased practice for teachers. Additionally, practical examinations should be focused on real-world application rather than theoretical knowledge. The study suggests that the government should persist with its role of providing the essential infrastructure and teaching/learning resources in collaboration with educative stakeholders, and teachers to be fully equipped trainees at their uptake in the working environment. This study focused on institutional parameters forecast, but this research favored other aspects of social and cultural factors that influence the program.

In a study conducted by Waihura, Kagema and Richard (2016), the attitudes of TVET trainees in Nyeri County, Kenya were investigated. The study aimed to determine areas that need positive attitudes in TVET among trainees out of technical training. The research used a descriptive design, was conducted within Nyeri County and involved 747 pupils. The study population was made up of 10 heads of departments of applied sciences, 45 supervisors from the companies to which the trainees were attached and a total of 275 students or more. According to the Study, HODs and trainees perceived that a larger part of 62.5% and 58.3%, respectively noted TVET training was considered as debasing knowledge among members of the society. TVET was seen as a theory-based training and therefore the trainees did not get sufficient exposure to the practicality of their study; this stands out since 62.5% of HODs support it while an astounding figure, 77.1% endorsed it with trainees. In the end, it was concluded that indeed though among the public there is a perception towards TVET training as being one of low-class education. While the first study reports invaluable observations, others do not clearly state what method was used during the study hence calling into question the reliability and validity of conclusions that have been drawn after conducting such research. The current study thus was offered and grounded the research method of operation used.

Despite the growing need for skilled individuals in science and technology, and the high number of women graduating from higher education, women continue to be underrepresented in traditionally male-dominated occupations within the vocational sector (Waihura & Richard, 2016). Conversely, women maintain significant levels of employment in areas such as domestic service and education (specifically teachers and trainers). However, their presence in fields such as physics, information communications

technology (ICT), and engineering is notably low (Raju and Kidane 2016). Previous research conducted by Raju and Kidane (2016), Waihura, Kagema, and Richard (2016), Awuor, Bundi, Mkutu, and Omollo (2021), Thienemann (2016), and others have certain deficiencies when it comes to addressing acceptability of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) among young people. The deficiencies identified in these investigations, as emphasized in the literature analysis, underscore the need for more research in this domain. This research examined the acceptability of Vocational training as a social protection mechanism by young mothers in vocational training centers in Alego Usonga Sub County.

1.7 Research design and methodology

This study was conducted using a descriptive research approach. Gill and Johnson (2018) stated that a descriptive design was used to identify specific features of population, participants, and to compare distinct points on time. According to Schreiber and Asner-Self (2020), the descriptive design technique allows for the collection of background information. Additionally, this strategy minimizes the researcher's ability to influence the responses of study participants by reducing the opportunity to motivate them. The research's design is particularly strong in its ability to thoroughly investigate, delineate, and evaluate the connections of the participants included in this study. The approach facilitated the researcher in collecting accurate data on the factors influencing vocational training among young mothers in Alego Usonga Sub County.

Alego Sub-County is a political division in Kenya that serves as an electoral constituency. This is one of the six electoral districts within Siaya County. The constituency was created in preparation for the national elections in 1963. The other name for it is Alego-Usonga Constituency. Alego Constituency consists of Siaya town, Central Alego, South Central Alego, East Alego, South-East Alego, South Alego, West Alego, South West Alego, and Usonga sites of Uranga Division. The primary economic pursuits are subsistence agriculture, which entails the cultivation of cotton, as well as river fishing. The population under investigation in this research consisted of Sigul Vocational Training Center, Ngiya Vocational Training Center, Ndira Youth Polytechnic, Ndere Vocational Training Center, Randago and Kabura Uhuyi VCTs, and Dominion Farms Training Centre. A group of 248 young moms who were participating in vocational training was selected as the focus of the study. The target demographic is determined by their active engagement in vocational training. The research only recruited mothers aged between 18 and 35 years. The sample size for the whole experiment consisted of 112 young moms from the target demographic mentioned above.

Sample size determination

Sample size determination is the mathematical estimation of the number of subjects/units to be included in the study as decided by the investigator. In this study, the sample size of 112 young mothers were determined using the Yamane's formula: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$. The variables in this formula are:

n = the sample size

N = sample population in the study.

e = the margin error in the calculation

1 and 2 are the constant numbers in the formula.

Table 1: Sample Size

Institution	Population	Percentage	Sample size
Sigul Vocational Training Center	40	16.1	17
Nginya Vocational Training Center	25	10.1	12
Ndira Youth Polytechnic	37	14.9	16
Ndere Vocational Training Center	20	8.1	11
Randago and Kabura Uhuyi VCTSs	26	10.5	12
Dominion Farms Training Center	18	7.3	5
Siaya Institute of Technology	82	33.1	39
Total	248	100	112

Source: Field data, 2023

Sample and Sampling Techniques

This research used a mix of Snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling method, and basic random sampling. The first round of sampling included Snowball sampling, which facilitated the identification of responder clusters and subsequently guided the selection of subsequent participants in the study process. The selection of individual responders was conducted via the use of a basic random sampling technique. The research used simple random sampling to eliminate any potential bias. This method included randomly selecting individuals from a larger group to form a subset. Each member of the population had an equal chance of being picked. The simple random sampling was used as alternative because the snowball sampling is bias and generalization and difficulty in controlling sample composition. Questionnaires were used to obtain primary data, with participants administering them to themselves. The surveys consist of structured questions that use the Likert scale. The questionnaire consists of four sections. The first section is designed to get demographic information from the respondents, while the other sections are intended to collect data related to the research issue. Questionnaires were distributed to the research participants by manual delivery (drop-off and pick-up).

The researcher ran a pilot test on a sample of responders, which constituted 10% of the target population. The results from both the respondents were linked to assess the instruments' dependability. The pretesting results were computed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Formula. To be considered dependable, the reliability coefficient should be at least 0.7, as per the suggested range. The Cronbach alpha coefficient, a measure of internal consistency, was used to assess the internal reliability of the instrument. The supervisors verified the correctness of the instruments. Before the actual research, the sample and item validity were ensured in the current investigation. The core of content validity is in the extent to which the test accurately measures occurrences by the goals and research questions. Item validity refers to the extent to which the items used in measuring content are relevant and accurate. The sampling validity guaranteed that the items selected for measurement accurately represented the whole content area chosen. Validity addressed the inquiries I assessed. The content validity of the research

instrument was established by obtaining the professional opinion of the appointed University supervisor about the substance of the questions. The well-being of the research participants is prioritized above scientific curiosity. The respondents were handled with respect and politeness, and they were asked to engage in the research of their own accord. This study obtained research authorization from the Post Graduate School of the Catholic University of East Africa and NACOSTI. To maintain anonymity, the respondents' identities and names were disguised, and they were referred to as respondents or by their gender. The research adhered to the principle of voluntary consent, ensuring that only those who willingly chose to participate were included. The idea of informed consent was guided by the facts relevant to this investigation. Before initiating this investigation, the researcher engaged in communication with the participants. Prioritizing the recognition of other academics' work is necessary to prevent plagiarism.

Control measures, in the form of standardized metrics, were used to ensure the accuracy and thoroughness of the data-entering process. Before data input, the surveys were coded using unique identification. The inconsistencies were confirmed using numerical analysis. The data were also validated to determine internal incongruity and comprehensiveness. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23, which is a statistical tool often used by social scientists. The mean and standard deviation was used to quantify central tendency and dispersion, respectively. Inferential statistics was examined using regression and correlation analysis. The data was subjected to descriptive data analysis and thereafter displayed via the use of frequency tables and charts. The qualitative data was evaluated using theme analysis and presented in a continuous prose format. Regression analysis identified the causal relationship between the studied variables.

The below equation used:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where the variables will be identified as follows;

Y – Access to Vocational Training by Young Mothers

X1 - Acceptability of Vocational Training

X2 - Community Norms Service Delivery Strategies

X3 - Service Delivery Strategies

β_0 - Slope of regression equation's y-intercept

$\beta_1 \dots \beta_4$, - are regression coefficients

ε - Error term.

1.8 Findings and Discussions

Response rate

All 112 questionnaires were properly completed and returned, resulting in a 100% response rate. According to Edward et al. (2002), a return rate of at least 80 per cent is considered outstanding, while a rate between 60 and 80 per cent is considered adequate.

The table below shows the course the young mothers undertakes in the vocational training institutions.

Table 2: Course taken by Young Mothers per Age Bracket

Course taken by the students	15-25	25-30	Total
Masonry	45.0%	55.0%	100
Carpentry	100.0%	-	100
Tailor and Dressmaking	40.3%	59.7%	100
Motor Vehicle Mechanic	-	100.0%	100
Leatherwork	100%	-	100
Electrical and Electronics	95.2%	4.8%	100
Beauty Therapy	40.0%	60.0%	100
Building Technology	100.0%	-	100
Welding	100.0%	-	100

Source: Field data, 2023

The most popular courses in the youth polytechnics were Electrical and Electronics, Tailoring and Dress Making, beauty treatment, and masonry. Courses in building technology and leatherwork were not widely favored. The courses that were determined to be unpopular include motor vehicle mechanics, carpentry, and welding. The results suggest that the demand for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is influenced by the individual courses offered, with young mothers showing a preference for some TVET courses over others. The researcher conducted a more detailed analysis of the course enrollment from the standpoint of young mothers.

It was disclosed that the majority of the courses were mostly dominated by individuals aged between 15 and 25 years. These courses include carpentry, leatherwork, electrical and electronics, building technology, and welding. The age group of 25-35 years is mostly represented in the fields of motor vehicles, beauty treatment, masonry, and tailoring and dressmaking. The data suggest that the majority of activities in the youth polytechnics are focused on young moms aged 15-25. This aligns with the findings presented in a recent report by the Ministry of Education (MOEST, 2015), which said that student enrollment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions was greater among those aged 15-25, except youth polytechnics. The latest statistics on the yearly influx of young individuals into the workforce, categorized by their level of education, reveal that around 95,000 youths have successfully finished Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Out of this total, 38,475 individuals fall within the age range of 15-25, while 56,524 individuals are aged between 25-35 years old (MOEST, 2015).

The table below shows the Certification for the recruitments of young mothers to vocational and technical training college for them to join.

Table 3: Certification for the recruitments of young mothers to vocational and technical training colleges

Certificate	Frequency	Percent
K.C.P.E	63	56.3
K.C.S.E	49	43.7
Total	112	100.0

Source: Field data, 2023

Regarding the credentials held by the informants, it was discovered that the majority held the Kenya credential of Primary Education (KCPE), although others had completed Form Four. One could argue that KCSE holders have a wide range of options to choose from to enhance their skills, while primary school leavers who do not continue to secondary school have fewer choices. As a result, they often choose to attend technical and vocational training colleges, as shown in the table above. As per the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2012, the capacity to use skills learned in conventional and informal apprenticeships is restricted because of the insufficient certification of training.

The student's perception on the level of Poverty

The findings presentation focused mostly on the research questions, with the respondents responding as seen in the image below. Many young moms were unable to attend or complete their education due to the poverty they faced. They said that the lack of resources for food, transportation, and housing was a major obstacle. This inevitably results in engaging in social deviances such as prostitution and early marriage as a means of earning a livelihood.

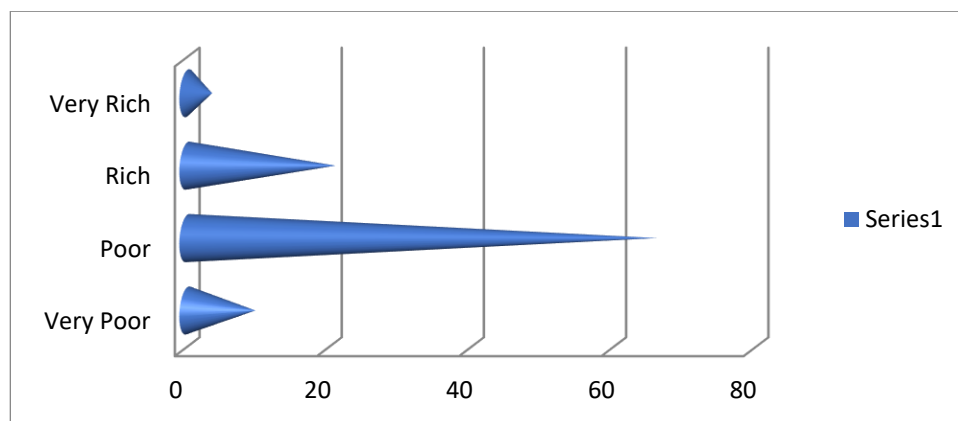


Figure 1: How the student perceived the poverty level of their parent

Source: Field data, 2023

The Handbook on Poverty and Inequality outlines three essential measures for assessing poverty, as identified by Haughton and Khandker (2009). These procedures are: Establishing a metric to measure the level of well-being. The process involves setting a minimal threshold for a certain measure to distinguish those who are considered poor from those who are not (known as the poverty line). Additionally, a summary statistic is calculated to combine the data from the distribution of this measure

about the poverty line. However, this research focused on the parents' spending on daily activities. According to Houghton and Khandker (2009), tracking expenditure is seen to be more manageable compared to tracking income, since revenue mostly originates from self-employment and/or irregular and informal sources. The student's assessment of their parents' poverty level is based on their capacity to satisfy basic household necessities.

According to Figure 2, the majority of the respondents regarded their parents as poor, with a minority rating them as affluent, and just a small number rating them as extremely rich. Consequently, the majority of parents whose children attend youth polytechnic are economically disadvantaged. While some individuals pursue polytechnic education via sponsorship, it may be said that the expenses associated with obtaining skills through TVET programs are comparatively lower than other programs, making it affordable for a larger number of people. The poverty level has been identified as a possible factor influencing the demand for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Acemoglu and Pischke (1998) argue that income levels limit people's ability to invest in training.

Vocational Training Acceptable as Social Protection Mechanism

On the basis of social protection on data analysis and after thorough investigation on the mechanism and young mother's responses, my findings were given as stated below.

Table 4: Showing the Responses by Young Mothers on Social Protections Mechanisms.

	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not sure
Competency on the Employment	✓		
Current employment demand		✓	
Financial sustainability			✓
Reliability to the labor market.	✓		
Access to all sectors			✓
Easy to use.		✓	

Source: Field data, 2023

According to the above response, a significant proportion of young mothers attending technical and vocational training colleges in the AlegoUsonga sub-county strongly believe or believe that there is a high demand for technical courses in the job market. However, a few were uncertain due to their limited understanding of economic development in society. Young moms need to acquire technical skills to address their impoverished situation and reduce their high reliance ratio, based on the hypothetical imperative, correlation, and analysis. The table shown below shows the percentage ratio.

Table 5: Percentage Ratio

	No. young mothers	Percentage
Agree	55	49.1
Strongly Agree	45	40.2
Not sure	12	10.7
Total	112	100

Source: Field data, 2023

Nexus between Community Norms and Access to Vocational Training

Here, the researcher pegged the investigation on societal norms. The table below shows the responses as given by the informants.

Table 6: Informants on the community norms impacting vocational training access

	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree
Recognition by the society	✓		
Motivation by religious leaders		✓	
Does gender roles affect women			✓
Potential of young mothers	✓		
Appreciation of the young mothers		✓	
Job security		✓	
Development of trade practices	✓		
Progressive development in the society	✓		
Enlighten women with skills.	✓		

Source: Field data, 2023

According to the table provided, the investigator discovered that societal norms have a significant impact on facilitating the development of young mothers and their access to vocational training courses. Approximately 60 to 70% of the respondents acknowledged that they were receiving recognition in the community for their involvement in technical courses. This recognition is supported by religious leaders and is seen as having the potential for growth and development, as well as skill enhancement for trainees in technical and vocational training institutions. 20% of respondents strongly agreed that the information they obtained has been used to create employment opportunities, enhance living conditions, and gain recognition within the community.

1.9 Conclusion

After collecting and analyzing data on the acceptability of Vocational training as a social protection mechanism by young mothers in vocational training centers in Alego Usonga Sub County, it was concluded that, the level of skills competition in TVET courses is crucial in shaping the demand for these courses. According to the findings of this study, a significant proportion of young mothers attending technical and vocational training colleges in the AlegoUsonga sub-county strongly believe or believe that there is a high demand for technical courses in the job market crucial in enabling their social protection mechanisms. However, a few were uncertain due to their limited understanding of economic development in society. Community norms including recognition by the society, motivation, gender roles, affected the acceptance level of TVET programs among the target population.

1.10 Recommendations

The National and County governments should guarantee that VET institutions are provided with the necessary resources, such as infrastructure, tools, and other facilities, that are needed for the different courses. To streamline this process, it is necessary to assess the course needs and evaluate the available resources. In cases where the resources are insufficient, appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that outdated tools are not used. This will provide sufficient and efficient training for graduates in all the courses.

It is crucial for both the National and County governments to make concerted efforts to raise knowledge about the competitiveness of TVET courses among parents and single moms. One way to do this is by implementing collaborative initiatives that focus on providing civic education via TVET. Throughout these initiatives, it is crucial to promote and showcase TVET as very important in the job market. The campaign should include the participation of accomplished TVET graduates who are from the same area. This aims to shift the idea of TVET as a realm of inadequacy.

TVET institutions should enhance the dissemination of information on their diverse courses and associated expenses to broaden their reach to a larger audience. The National and County governments, constituency managers, and TVET institution management should establish procedures to alleviate the financial strain on parents about their income withholdings. These objectives may be accomplished by implementing strategies such as augmenting financial aid for students from counties, constituencies, and wards attending Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions, as well as establishing sponsorship initiatives. Furthermore, the payment system may be structured in a way that facilitates convenient fee payment for parents and young moms or guardians, such as offering reasonable installment options.

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