

SOCIETAL PERCEPTION OF TVET AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS MOTIVATION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES IN KENYA"
LOOKS TO ME LIKE IT'S TOUTOLOGY TO SAY TVET EDUCATION

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Abstract

Background: Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions play an important role in providing practical skills and employability opportunities for national development in Kenya. Despite this importance, TVET education is often associated with negative societal perceptions, where students are viewed as academically weak compared to university students. Such attitudes may influence students' confidence, motivation, and learning experiences within vocational institutions.

Objective: The study aimed to examine societal perception toward TVET education and assess its influence on student motivation and learning outcomes among TVET students in Kenya.

Methodology: The study adopted a cross-sectional quantitative research design involving students from two faith-based TVET institutions in Nairobi and Nakuru Counties. Data were collected using the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) together with socio-demographic information. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyse the data collected from the participants.

Findings: The findings revealed that TVET students were aware of the negative societal attitudes associated with vocational education. Despite these perceptions, students demonstrated high levels of intrinsic motivation characterised by pleasure, personal value, and competence in learning. The findings further showed that students remained committed to their studies and educational goals despite the social stigma attached to TVET education.

Conclusion: The study concludes that although negative societal perceptions toward TVET education continue to exist, they do not necessarily prevent students from remaining motivated in their learning activities. Intrinsic motivation plays an important role in sustaining students' engagement and persistence in vocational education. The study recommends the promotion of positive societal attitudes toward TVET education and the strengthening of supportive learning environments within TVET institutions.

Keywords: TVET Education, Societal Perception, Student Motivation, Learning Outcomes, Intrinsic Motivation, Kenya

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions have become important centres for the development of practical skills and employable competencies necessary for economic growth and national development. TVET institutions provide opportunities for students to acquire technical knowledge and vocational skills in areas such as carpentry, plumbing, tailoring, electrical installation, information technology, food and beverage, and business management. UNESCO (2013) describes TVET as an educational system that equips learners with practical skills for employment, production, and development. Similarly, Lamb (2011) posits that TVET is used as a means to prepare people for labour market opportunities, while Kingombe (2011) views TVET as an important solution to youth unemployment. In Kenya, TVET institutions therefore play a significant role in preparing skilled manpower for industrial and technological advancement.

Despite the importance of TVET education, society often associates vocational education with students who are academically weak or unable to secure admission into universities. Evidence shows that TVET education is not held in high esteem compared to university education. Agyarkor (2013) observed that workers with vocational qualifications are often treated as subordinate to university graduates despite performing important technical work. Misganaw (2011) similarly noted that TVET has low social and financial recognition in society. In Kenya, Simiyu (2009) reported that the manual work associated with TVET has made the field unattractive, while Sang, Muthaa and Mbugua (2012) found that TVET institutions are often perceived merely as centres for producing labour for the market rather than institutions promoting personal development. These negative societal

perceptions create stigma toward students enrolled in vocational institutions and may affect their confidence and educational experiences.

Although negative societal attitudes toward TVET education continue to exist, students enrolled in vocational institutions remain committed to their studies and learning activities. This persistence suggests the presence of motivation among learners despite the social stigma attached to vocational education. Ryan and Deci (2000) describe intrinsic motivation as behaviours that derive satisfaction from the activity itself. Intrinsic motivation is therefore viewed as the internal drive that encourages students to participate in learning activities because of pleasure, value, and competence. Previous studies have shown that intrinsic motivation positively influences learning outcomes and academic engagement. Omar, Jain and Noordi (2013) reported high levels of motivation among students in polytechnic institutions, while Niehaus, Rudasill and Adelson (2012) found that intrinsic motivation positively associates with academic achievement. The continued participation of students in TVET institutions despite negative societal perceptions therefore raises the need to examine how social attitudes influence student motivation and learning outcomes in vocational education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in Kenya play an important role in the development of practical and technical skills necessary for employment and national development. Despite this importance, vocational education continues to face negative societal perception. Society often perceives students enrolled in TVET institutions as academically weak compared to university students, thereby undermining the value and status of vocational education. The manual nature of work associated with TVET has further contributed to the stigma attached to students pursuing vocational training.

Despite these negative perceptions, students in TVET institutions continue to remain committed to their studies and learning activities. This persistence suggests the presence of motivation among students despite societal attitudes toward vocational education. Previous studies have focused on challenges affecting TVET institutions, but limited studies have examined how societal perception influences student motivation and learning outcomes among TVET students in Kenya. Therefore, there is a need to examine the influence of societal perception on student motivation and learning outcomes in TVET education.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- i. To examine societal perception toward TVET education among TVET students.
- ii. To assess the influence of societal perception on student motivation and learning outcomes among TVET students.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What societal perceptions exist toward TVET education among TVET students?
- ii. How does societal perception influence student motivation and learning outcomes among TVET students?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is important because it helps in understanding how societal perception toward TVET education influences student motivation and learning outcomes. The findings may help teachers and education stakeholders understand that despite the negative attitudes associated with vocational education, TVET students remain committed to their learning activities and educational goals. The study may also help improve learning environments and teaching approaches that strengthen students' motivation in TVET institutions.

In addition, the study may contribute to improving public understanding of TVET education and reducing the stigma associated with vocational training. The findings could encourage society to appreciate the importance of vocational education in skill development, employment creation, and national development. The study may further provide useful information for policymakers, educationists, and researchers interested in vocational education and student motivation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of TVET Education

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) refers to an education system that equips learners with practical skills, technical knowledge, and competencies necessary for employment and national development. UNESCO (2013) describes TVET as education that prepares learners for the world of work through practical and vocational skills. Lamb (2011) posits that TVET is used as a means to prepare people for labour market opportunities, while Kingombe (2011) views TVET as an important solution to youth unemployment. In Kenya, TVET institutions provide training in areas such as carpentry, plumbing, tailoring, electrical installation,

information technology, hospitality, and business management. The institutions therefore contribute significantly to skill development, employability, and economic growth.

2.2 Societal Perception toward TVET

Despite its importance, TVET education continues to face negative societal perception. Agyarkor (2013) observed that workers with vocational qualifications are often treated as subordinate to university graduates despite performing important technical work. Misganaw (2011) similarly noted that TVET has low social and financial recognition. In many societies, vocational education is viewed as an alternative pathway for students who fail to qualify for university education. Bortei-Doku, Aryeetey and Andoh (2011) reported that TVET is commonly perceived as a reserve option for students who lack qualifications for higher education.

In Kenya, Simiyu (2009) found that the manual work associated with TVET has made the field unattractive, while Sang, Muthaa and Mbugua (2012) reported that TVET institutions are often perceived merely as centres for producing labour for the market rather than institutions promoting personal development. Such negative attitudes contribute to stigma toward TVET students and undermine the value of vocational education in society.

2.3 Student Motivation in TVET Institutions

Ryan and Deci (2000) describe intrinsic motivation as behaviours that derive satisfaction from the activity itself. Intrinsic motivation is therefore viewed as the internal drive that encourages learners to engage in educational activities because of pleasure, value, and competence. In learning situations, students who are intrinsically motivated demonstrate persistence, curiosity, and commitment toward learning activities.

Pleasure in learning refers to the joy and satisfaction learners derive from acquiring knowledge and skills. DeCharms (1968) proposed that people gain pleasure when they engage in activities that give them a sense of causation, while Schlechty (2011) argued that students who are fully engaged in learning derive joy from educational activities. Personal value in learning refers to the importance learners attach to educational tasks. Brophy and Albert (2008) explain value in learning as a learning attitude that helps students feel that school tasks are meaningful and important. Competence in learning refers to the abilities and skills learners possess in handling academic activities successfully. Solzbacher (2006) describes competence as the skills and behaviours required to follow learning processes effectively.

2.4 Learning Outcomes among TVET Students

Studies have shown that intrinsic motivation positively contributes to learning outcomes among students. Moneta and Siu (2002) documented that intrinsic motivation positively associates with academic performance when students are faced with complex learning tasks. Lemos and Veríssimo (2014) also reported that intrinsic motivation strongly connects with academic success. Niehaus, Rudasill and Adelson (2012) found that students with high intrinsic motivation demonstrate positive academic achievement and engagement in learning activities.

Despite the negative societal perception associated with vocational education, students in TVET institutions continue to participate actively in learning activities and remain committed to their studies. This persistence suggests that intrinsic motivation plays an important role in sustaining academic engagement and learning among TVET students.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (2004). SDT explains intrinsic motivation as doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable. According to Deci and Ryan (2004), learning flourishes when three human needs are satisfied: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Students experience competence when challenged with learning tasks and given feedback, autonomy when they are supported to make decisions in learning, and relatedness when they feel accepted and connected to others. Ryan and Deci (2000) argued that when these needs are satisfied, students become more intrinsically motivated and actively engaged in learning activities.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional research design. The design enabled the researcher to establish relationships among variables and draw inferences from existing differences between subjects at one point in time. The study adopted a quantitative research methodology and utilised descriptive and inferential statistical analysis.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The study targeted both male and female TVET students in Kenya. The participants shared common characteristics such as learning focused on skills acquisition and the potential to exhibit intrinsic motivation in learning activities. The study was conducted in two faith-based TVET institutions located in Nairobi and Nakuru Counties.

Both probability and non-probability sampling procedures were used in the study. Convenience sampling was used in selecting the two TVET institutions, while simple random sampling was used in selecting the students who participated in the study. The sampled institutions were Don Bosco Boys Town Technical Institute, Nairobi, and Mwangaza College, Nakuru.

3.3 Data Collection

The Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) developed by Ryan (1982) was used as the research instrument. The study utilised sections of the IMI that focused on pleasure in learning, perception of personal competence, and value in learning. The questionnaire also contained demographic information including gender, age, department, entry qualification, and academic performance. The questionnaire was self-administered to the participants.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, standard deviations, and cross tabulations were used to analyse socio-demographic characteristics and levels of intrinsic motivation. Inferential statistics, including one-way ANOVA and chi-square analysis, were used to establish relationships among variables and make inferences from the collected data.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Permission for data collection was obtained from the relevant authorities and the administrations of the sampled institutions. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured throughout the study, and participants identified themselves using admission numbers instead of names. Consent forms were signed before responding to the questionnaire, and the collected data were securely handled to protect participants' privacy.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic details of the participants were analysed using descriptive statistics including frequencies and cross tabulations. The demographic characteristics included gender, age, and academic department. The study involved both male and female students from the sampled TVET institutions in Nairobi and Nakuru Counties. The respondents were drawn from different departments and age categories, reflecting the diverse background of TVET students.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	193	55.5
	Female	155	44.5
Age	18–20 Years	—	—
	21–25 Years	—	—
	Above 25 Years	—	—
Department	Mechanical Engineering	—	—
	Electrical Department	—	—
	Business Courses	—	—
	Fashion & Design	—	—

Interpretation:

The findings showed that the study involved participants from different gender groups, age categories, and academic departments, indicating a diverse representation of TVET students.

4.2 Societal Perception toward TVET Education

The findings revealed that students were aware of the negative societal attitudes associated with TVET education. Many participants perceived that society views vocational education as less prestigious compared to

university education. The manual nature of work associated with TVET and the perception that vocational institutions are meant for academically weak students contributed to the negative image attached to TVET education.

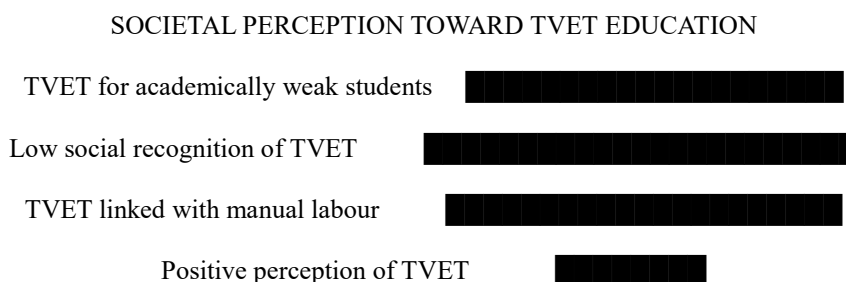


Figure 1. Societal Perception toward TVET Education

Interpretation:

The figure indicates that negative societal attitudes toward TVET education remain prevalent. Most students perceived that society associates TVET education with low academic ability and manual labour.

4.3 Student Motivation and Learning Outcomes

Despite the negative societal perception associated with vocational education, the findings revealed that TVET students demonstrated high levels of intrinsic motivation. Students showed pleasure, personal value, and competence in learning activities, indicating strong commitment toward their studies. The findings further revealed that students remained engaged in learning activities despite the stigma associated with TVET education.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Intrinsic Motivation Scores

Component of Motivation	Mean Score
Pleasure in Learning	82%
Personal Value	91%
Competence in Learning	87%

Interpretation:

The findings showed that students attached strong personal value to learning activities despite the negative societal perception toward vocational education. Competence and pleasure in learning also recorded high scores, demonstrating positive engagement and persistence in learning activities.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The findings support previous studies that reported negative societal attitudes toward vocational education. Agyarkor (2013) observed that vocational graduates are often treated as subordinate to university graduates, while Misganaw (2011) reported that TVET has low social and financial recognition. Simiyu (2009) also found that the manual work associated with TVET has made vocational education unattractive in Kenya.

Despite these negative societal perceptions, the findings revealed that students remained motivated in their learning activities. Omar, Jain and Noordi (2013) reported high levels of motivation among students in polytechnic institutions, while Niehaus, Rudasill and Adelson (2012) found that intrinsic motivation positively associates with academic achievement. The present findings therefore suggest that societal stigma toward TVET education does not necessarily prevent students from remaining committed to their educational goals.

The findings can further be interpreted using the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (2004). SDT explains that students become intrinsically motivated when their needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are satisfied. The high levels of pleasure, value, and competence observed among TVET students suggest that students remained internally motivated despite the negative social attitudes associated with vocational education. The persistence of students in TVET institutions therefore reflects the important role of intrinsic motivation in sustaining learning engagement and commitment.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined societal perception toward TVET education and its influence on student motivation and learning outcomes among TVET students in Kenya. The findings revealed that TVET education continues to face negative societal perception, where vocational education is often associated with low academic ability and manual labour. Despite these negative attitudes, TVET students demonstrated high levels of intrinsic motivation characterised by pleasure, personal value, and competence in learning activities.

The findings further revealed that students remained committed to their educational goals despite the stigma associated with vocational education. The study therefore concludes that although negative societal perceptions toward TVET education continue to exist, they do not necessarily prevent students from remaining motivated and engaged in learning activities. Teachers and TVET institutions should strengthen supportive learning environments that encourage student motivation, competence, and active participation in learning activities. Learning experiences that promote pleasure and personal value in education should be enhanced in vocational institutions.

Policymakers and society should work toward improving the public image of TVET education and reducing the stigma associated with vocational training. Greater awareness should be created regarding the importance of TVET in skill development, employment creation, and national development. More support should also be provided to TVET institutions in order to strengthen students' educational experiences and motivation in learning. Future studies should examine other social and environmental factors that influence student motivation and learning outcomes among TVET students. Comparative studies involving different categories of TVET institutions and studies focusing on societal attitudes toward vocational education in different regions are also recommended.

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