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Contribution of Vocational Educational Training on Promoting Self Employment in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania

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Keywords:

Vocational Education,
Capital Theory,
Self-employment,
Actualized Skill.

The study was based on the contribution of vocational educational training to promoting self-employment in Tanzania in Morogoro Municipality. Specifically, the study determined the relevance of skills acquired and the skills actualized by Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) Graduates and the Constraints that hinder the VETA graduates from getting into self-employment. This study was guided by a human capital theory which was propounded by Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz, in the 1950s and early 1960s. The theory states that “the more one invests in his/her education, the more returns one should receive in the form of earnings. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis and quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive analysis including index scale measurement. The findings indicated that self-employed VETA graduates performed their duties to generate income for their livelihood. There were different specializations that VETA graduates had, some specialized in driving, however, they were not employed as drivers, and instead, they were self-employed as motorcycle drivers driving commercial motorcycles. The relevance of the skills acquired and the skills actualized was determined by the curriculum used and what was taught in colleges. Also, VETA students have higher expectations of getting employment after graduation. The study concluded that the skills acquired by the VETA graduates are the most likely to be the activities performed by VETA graduates in generating income for their family livelihood. It also concluded that VETA graduates experienced similar constraints when taught about self-employment. The government should make sure that the colleges have advanced and more current equipment to make sure students are well up-to-date with current technology.

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INTRODUCTION

The government of Tanzania established an agency namely the VETA which was established by the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Act No. 1 of 1994 Cap 82 with revised edition 2006. Under section 4(1) (a)–(n) of the act, the VETA is entrusted with controlling, coordinating, supervising, and continuously improving the provision of quality Vocational Education and Training. Also, VETA is entrusted with the function of ensuring stable financing for the Vocational Education and Training system in the country. Moreover, under section 13 (2) b of the Act, the VETA is required to conduct tracer studies on the employment outcomes of vocational training graduates (VETA, 2019).

In Tanzania, VETA is an integral part of the education system as it is among five sub-sectors of the system and it aims at enabling and expanding the acquisition of life skills needed to meet the changing needs of industry and the economy. According to Mihayo, & Msami (2020), Vocational Education and Training in Tanzania is categorized into two such Technical Education and Training (TET), and Vocational Education and Training According to NACTVET (2022) TET and Vocational Education and Training together form ten levels qualifications framework (such as level 1 to level 10) whereby Vocational Education and Training takes the lowest three levels such as Level 1 to 3 and TET takes the rest beginning from Level 4 to level 10.

Tanzania has witnessed an increased enrollment in Vocational Education and Training centers in ten years consecutively from a total of 102,217 (52,027 male and 50,190 female) in the academic year 2010/2011 to a total of 320,143 (202,718 male and 117,425 female) in the academic year 2020/2021. The same goes with TET institutions where in the academic year 2015/2016 there was a total enrollment of 117,067 students whereas 57,895 were males and 59,172 were females the number

increased consecutively in five years and by the academic year 2020/2021 there were an enrollment of 210,775 students, out of them 111,244 were male students and 99,531 were female students (NACTVET, 2022).

VETA students acquire skills to meet the demands of the market. However, how much of the skills acquired actualized as per the demand of the market? This is the challenge to the VETA graduate employment. Nevertheless, there is inadequate information on whether the Vocational Education and Training graduates actualized their skills acquired in generating their income for their livelihood or not. Likewise; there is insufficient information about the contribution of vocational educational training to promoting self-employment. It is on this line that this study had seen it appropriate as it had focused on finding out the contribution of vocational educational training on promoting self-employment: a case of Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania.

Research Objectives

- To determine the relevance of skills acquired and the skills actualized by VETA graduates
- To examine the constraints that hinder the VETA graduates to get into self-employment

Research Questions

- How relevant are the skills acquired and skills actualized by VETA graduates?
- What are the constraints that hinder the VETA graduates from getting into self-employment?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally youth unemployment is critical. More than half of young people—around 776 million are outside the labor force, meaning that they are not in employment (ILO, 2020). Therefore, more attention is given to technical and vocational skills

development, especially to access to affordable, quality technical and vocational training; and the provision of technical and vocational skills to enhance both formal and informal employment (UNESCO, 2021). Many countries are arguing to strengthen the vocational part of their educational schooling system and bring existing vocational education and training systems closer to the current needs of the labor market so that young people can experience a smoother transition to jobs (Biavaschi, 2012).

Vocational Education and Training graduates have the opportunity of getting a job, either being employed or having self-employment. Although pathways into and out of self-employment vary from country to country, in Australia, particularly for men, the completion of vocational education significantly enhances the chances of running a business (Sikora, & Saha, 2018) as cited by (Sikora, & Saha, 2018). Countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Netherlands, Denmark, and Finland that have placed Technical Vocational Education and Training and Vocational Education and Training at the core of their education and training system, both in terms of curriculum review and financing, have ultimately succeeded in attaining structural transformation and industrialization, maintaining low youth unemployment rates and attain prosperity. In Germany for instance, Vocational Education and Training is based on nationally recognized occupations and vocational training regulations, which guarantee a national standard. The federal government is responsible for the non-school part of Vocational Education and Training and ensures that vocational training is always up to date (European Union, 2020). To address the unemployment problem, many African countries such as South Africa, Kenya, and Tanzania have introduced Vocational Education and Training to develop competencies in the relevant technical and vocational subjects for the world of work (Sarfo, 2016; UNESCO, & ILO, 2002).

Youths are engaged in different economic activities so as to earn income to meet their daily needs. It reported that Vocational Education and Training graduates obtain training skills that require actualizing them as per the demand of the market

(Mwakilema, 2020). The study by Vocational Education and Training (2019) reported that the economic benefits of the training to graduates include getting employment or employing others and earning salaries (20%); meeting the cost of living and improving living standard (16%); increasing/generating income (10%); and to be independent, support families and contribute to social activities (8%). Other economic benefits reported by the graduates were to develop their businesses, to own lands, modern houses, equipment, and savings. (Mwakilema, 2020). Some constraints make Vocational Education and Training graduates struggle to get employment, these include, mismatches between Vocational Education and Training education and labor market requirements, the students have the notion and belief of becoming employed soon after graduation and not being self-employed (Sule, & Ntawigaya, 2021; Sarfati, 2013). Equally, it is argued that Graduates in Tanzania from Vocational Education and Training colleges struggle to find jobs regardless of the professionalism possessed (Garaba, & Kumar, 2023).

Education's critical role in determining and enhancing individuals' labor market outcomes is well documented in the literature. Evidence around the world shows that technical and vocational training can enhance employability skills and increase the chance of obtaining a stable job in both the public and private sectors (Leyaro *et al.*, 2019). Many developed countries and developing including Tanzania have established policies to pay attention to Technical Vocational Education and Training and Vocational Education and Training. Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges, centers, and institutions must adhere to both vision and mission and ensure that teachers, students, and graduates are fully and successfully implementing the policy (Garaba, & Kumar, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This paper is guided by human capital theory as applied by Gary S. Becker (1993). The theory states that "the more one invests in his/her education, the more returns one should receive in the form of earnings" (Gary S. Becker 1993). It further states that skills obtained through education and experience in one's lifetime are what develop an intuition for

successful business behavior due to a broad set of skills that are transferable among occupations (Gary S. Becker 1993).

This theory is supported by the fact that having education and work experience in the auto mechanic field should result in higher economic success for an individual starting an auto mechanic shop than having education and experience in music trying to start the same auto mechanic shop. In this sense, VETA graduates with specific vocational educational skills and experience in particular fields should theoretically have more advantages than those with general educational skills and experience doing a similar business when looking at the success of their businesses.

In the context of this study, physical capital and human capital were factors considered to influence revenue generation. The theory is relevant to this study since the theory states that “the more one invests in his/her education, the more returns one should receive in the form of earnings.” In this sense, the more Vocational Education and Training students invest in Vocational Education and Training education the more return will receive from their self-employed or being employed. Thus, the Theory of Human Capital is relevant to this study by examining the contributions of VETA graduates to their family livelihood and well-being.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a convergent research design which was the mixed design that allows the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data concurrently.

The study was conducted within Morogoro Municipality in Morogoro region, Tanzania. Morogoro municipality was chosen by the researcher due to convenient reasons and the access of sufficient data.. Morogoro Municipal also was chosen by the government to be the industrialized zone in which the industries needed skilled manpower for production. As such, many Vocational Education and Training graduates settle in Morogoro Municipality because of having opportunities for self-employment for Vocational Education and Training skilled graduates. The targeted population of this study was the Vocational

Education and Training graduates of Morogoro Municipality.

This paper employed a convenience sampling method; convenience sampling method was applied by following VETA graduates in their working centers and asking questionnaire questions. A convenient sample of 110 respondents VETA graduates was sufficient to generate data on all the objectives as they focused on assessing the contribution of vocational educational training to promoting self-employment. Furthermore, the purposive sampling techniques employed tutors of VETA and principals of VETA for interviews which were conducted focusing on each Vocational Education and Training program.

This paper employed three types of data collection methods namely questionnaire, interview, and observation. The researcher prepared a list of questions thematically in hard copies which were written in English and Kiswahili. The questionnaire was administered to self-employed Vocational Education and Training graduates as well as the Vocational Education and Training trainers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Vocational Education and Training trainers and principals of Vocational Education and Training. The data that were obtained included the economic activity actualized which is irrelevant to the graduate's profession and the constraints that hinder the VETA graduates from getting self-employment. Responses were directly transcribed and recorded in writing and audio recorded by using a voice recorder. An observation guide was used to observe some economic activities performed by Vocational Education and Training graduates. The observation checklist is used to guide the activities performed for example, Building Engineering, Clothing, Plumbing and pipe fitting, Electrical, Mechanical, Driving, Refrigeration and Air conditioning, Carpentry, Welding and fabrication, Hotel management, and production.

Enhancing Validity: Pilot Testing: Pre-test the instrument with a small sample to identify and address potential issues. Likewise enhancing reliability: The data that were found were tested through Cronbach's Alpha by using SPSS. In this paper, quantitative data from questionnaires was

analyzed through the Kobo Toolbox in terms of frequencies and percentages. The collected data were presented using tables. In this study, all qualitative data collected through interviews and observation were analyzed through content analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Relevance of Skills Acquired and the Skills Actualized

The study also focused on the relevance of skills acquired and the skills actualized among VETA graduates. As such, some VETA graduates could not actualize the skills acquired in VETA colleges which are contrary to their expectations as per their goals of enrolling in VETA colleges.

Table 1: Skills Acquired and the Skills Actualized

Relevance of skills acquired and the skills actualized	SA %	A%	N%	D%	SD%
The relevance between the skills I acquired and the activities performed	73.6	7.3	0.9	8.2	10.0
There is no relationship between skills acquired and activities performed	11.8	8.2	0.9	48.2	30.9
The current curriculum about competence-based should be taught in 1st year	22.7	41.8	8.2	17.3	10.0
The current curriculum about competence-based should be taught in 2nd year	26.4	38.2	10.0	15.5	10.0
The current curriculum about competence-based should be taught in 3rd year	14.5	23.6	6.4	40.0	15.5
There is no relationship between Vocational Education and Training skills acquired and the employment market	15.5	16.4	8.2	38.2	21.8

Key: **SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, U = Undecided, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree**

Source: Field Data, 2024

Regarding the matter, the study disclosed that. 73.6% of the VETA graduates strongly agreed that there was relevance between skills acquired and the activities performed (Table 1). This finding was also confirmed by one of the Principles of VETA College who pointed out that:

“There is a significant relationship between the skills acquired and skills actualized due to the facts that there are Several VETA programs imparted to the learners, most of these programs taught here are those that are determined by the demand of the market of the community surrounding the college, for example, this college is located at the municipal, the program like welding, Carpentry and joinery, business administration and alike are imparted here. However, if the college is located in rural areas some of the programmes must be agricultural engineering. This is to make learners fit to the demands of the community and environment at large” (R1, 2024).

The findings above indicate that the relevance of the skills acquired and skills actualized are determined by the environment where the Vocational Education

and Training graduates can actualize the skills obtained from their colleges. The market is mostly located in urban areas, in this fact, the Vocational Education and Training graduates are required to determine the demand where they can actualize their skills. Likewise, Ntallima (2014) pinpointed that problems and challenges differed according to the place and geographical area of the employment. Many youths run to urban areas with the expectation of getting employment. In rural areas, employment opportunities are few compared to urban areas. As such, VETA graduates are in a better condition to withstand adverse economic situations in case of falling selling prices, rising costs of production, or declining demand for products or services in the market than their counterparts (Mwakilema, 2020).

On the contrary, it was further found that 48.2% of the VETA graduates disagreed that there is no relationship between skills acquired and activities performed, likewise, 30.9% of VETA graduates strongly disagreed that there is no relationship between skills acquired and activities performed. Furthermore, it was found that 38.2% of VETA graduates disagreed that there is no relationship

between VETA skills acquired and the employment market and 21.8% of the VETA graduates strongly disagreed that there is no relationship between VETA skills acquired and the employment market (Table, 1). From the interview it was revealed that in some cases the training lacked some requirements, this was established by one of the owners of the Carpentry and Joinery Workshop (Table, 4.6).

...in our training, the indicated content materials comprised wood, steel, and glassware, but in Vocational Education and Training, we only learned about wood materials. As a result, we were unable to develop our skills with other materials, such as steel and glass (Aluminium), until we visited businesses for fieldwork and received instruction on how to build equipment utilizing aluminium (R4, 2024).

The finding above signifies that there is a lack of some materials to be used for learning. This is the weakness of the VETA colleges; they would be well equipped with all kinds of materials needed for VETA students to learn. In this case, VETA some VETA graduates do not actualize their skills acquired, instead, shift to other skills that they never pursued in VETA colleges for example some VETA graduates were trained in Carpentry and Joinery by using wood, but they are self-employed in Carpentry and Joinery by using glass and aluminum. This is the problem of the colleges themselves that lack resources for teaching VETA students.

The findings in this subsection are contrary to the theory that states that the more one invests in his/her education, the more returns one should receive in the form of earnings. As such some Vocational Education and Training graduates do not actualize their potentialities as they spend some years investing in such education. In this sense, the VETA graduates are likely to fail to meet the demands of the market as they might be trained using old technology equipment while the market demands the current technology. Leyaro (2019) established that the problem of employment for Vocational Education and Training graduates could be a result of a skills mismatch between what is demanded in the labor market and what job seekers offer or the type of jobs and remunerations expected by the job seekers. However, Ntallima (2014) found that

Problems and challenges of employment differ according to the place and geographical area of the employment.

The findings also pinpointed that 41.8% of the VETA graduates agreed that the current curriculum about competence-based should be taught in 1st year, likewise, 22.7% of VETA graduates strongly agreed that the current curriculum about competence-based should be taught in 1st year. Likewise, it was found that 38.2% of the VETA graduates agreed with the statement which stated that the current curriculum competence-based should be taught in 2nd year and 26.4% of the VETA graduates strongly agreed that the current curriculum competence-based should be taught in 2nd year. Furthermore, it was found that 40.0% of the respondents disagreed that the current curriculum about competence-based should be taught in 3rd year, however, 23.6% of the respondents agreed that the current curriculum about competence-based should be taught in 3rd year (Table 1). During the interview with key informants, it was found that competence-based Vocational Education and Training were developed to address the demands of the labor market. This was narrated by one of the Key informants who said.

... The curriculum was developed to address the demands of the labor market. For instance, our teaching curriculum involves a variety of skills; for example, a masonry learner may be required to learn communication skills, computer skills, and life skills that were not previously taught. The incorporation of soft competencies in the competence-based curriculum broadens the pool of skills that learners can use to compete for employment in the job market (R2, 2024).

The findings above indicate that a competence-based curriculum is significant to VETA students, due to the facts that, well-trained Vocational Education and Training students creates the easiest way of being employed or self-employed. Mwakilema (2020) found that concerning delivering quality vocational training, it should dwell on the following aspects: the manner vocational skills are imparted to learners using learning outcomes; how skills are assessed, certified, and exploited; and pertinent supporting conditions, referred to the policies, practices, and

institutions that underpin vocational education and training.

Constraints Faced by VETA

Limitations and drawbacks are inevitable in human life, likewise, the VETA graduates had their

limitations when struggling for self-employment. Some main restraints are based on misinformation about the Vocational Education and Training market and others are based on a lack of capital for self-employment (Table 2).

Table 2: Constraints Faced by VETA Graduates

Constraints Faced by VETA Graduates	SA %	A%	N%	D%	SD%
Vocational Education and Training graduates believe they will be employed immediately after graduating	59.1	17.3	4.5	13.6	5.5
Vocational Education and Training graduates don't believe in self-employment	15	10.0	10.0	38.2	26.4
Vocational Education and Training graduates miss information that is related to the employment market	57.3	29.1	1.8	5.5	6.4
Vocational Education and Training graduates lack capital for self-employed	82.7	14.5	0.0	1.8	0.9

Key: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, U = Un decided, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Source: Field Data, 2024

The study findings revealed that 59.1% of the VETA graduates strongly agreed that Vocational Education and Training graduates believe they will be employed immediately after graduating and 17.3% of the respondents agreed that VETA graduates believe they will be employed immediately after graduating. On the contrary, it was discovered that 38.2% of VETA graduates disagreed with the statement that Vocational Education and Training graduates believe they will be employed immediately after graduating, likewise, 26.4% of respondents strongly disagreed that VETA graduates do not believe in self-employment (Table 2). This means that employment is the first goal for any learner, whether be it self-employed or being employed. Students of VETA have high expectations of being employed or self-employed immediately after graduating. It is believed that those joining Vocational Education and Training directly after completing school may have a clear vision of what kind of employment they want to join (VETA, 2019).

The study findings established that 82.7% strongly agreed that VETA graduates lack capital for self-employed, likewise, 14.5% of VETA graduates agreed VETA graduates lack capital for self-employed (Table 2). This means self-employment does not only depend on skills that the Vocational Education and Training graduates have acquired but

it is also determined by the capital that they have. The findings are in line with the theory that states that the more one invests in his/her education, the more returns one should receive in the form of earnings. According to Ntallima (2014), education and financial factors were more pertinent factors to self-employment.

Furthermore, table 2 disclosed that 57.3% of VETA graduates strongly agreed that Vocational Education and Training graduates miss information that is related to the employment market and 29.1% of the respondents agreed that Vocational Education and Training graduates miss information that is related to the employment market. Similarly, during the interview with one of the key informants it was pinpointed that in some cases Vocational Education and Training students are trained for a year or more without practicing them in the required working places. This was made clear by one of the key informants, who had this to say,

... Since Tanzania lacks some initiatives, a Vocational Education and Training trainer may train for three or more years without having any exposure to the workplace. My conclusion is that this circumstance makes it more difficult for our learners to acquire the skills that are required to be employable and, ultimately, reduces the quality of our graduates' work (R3, 2024).

The quotation above implies that VETA students need to acquire skills in colleges and at the same time get enough time to conduct practical field at the workplace. This gives VETA students experience on their skills acquired and exposure to the demands. This means a lack of experience in VETA skills can be an obstacle for the VETA graduate to get employment or have self-employment immediately after graduation. The findings are in line with Ntallima's (2014) study established that vocational graduates failed to get employment because they lack job experience because they completed vocational skills and looked for employment without work experience. Employers need experience of vocational youth of more than two years which is seen as an obstacle for vocational graduates.

The relevance of the skills acquired and the skills actualized was determined by the curriculum used and what was taught in colleges. Some were taught practical skills by using old model equipment which were less likely applied in the market. The self-employment environment was one of the factors that made either the graduates actualize the skills acquired or opt for other activities. Rural environments were less attractive for self-environment compared to urban areas where there is a high demand for skilled labor. Some graduates were self-employed in driving commercial motorcycles instead of driving vehicles as their professional. The VETA students have a higher expectation of getting employment as soon as they graduate. This is common even to other students pursuing their studies in colleges and universities. However, the situation is contrary, Vocational Education and Training graduates lack information related to the employment market. Likewise, lack of experience and funds are among the limitations to self-employment among the VETA graduates.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that most of the VETA graduates actualize the skills obtained by employing themselves. Although VETA graduates' expectations can be contrary to what is real after their graduation, yet, the skills imparted to students in most cases are actualized by the graduates although in some cases they are affected by the environment. The study also concluded that self-

employment is confronted with some constraints such that self-employment demands capital, experience, and access to information. In such context, most of the VETA graduates experienced similar constraints when they were thought for self-employment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that the government should make sure the VETA colleges are well-equipped with teaching resources for practical. It should make sure that the colleges have advanced and more current equipment to make sure students are well up-to-date with current technology. It further recommended that VETA students should be well informed about the market's demand before they register to pursue Vocational Education and training. They should not be forced by anyone to pursue the program. This will encourage them to develop their careers as long as it will be based on their choice.

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