



Integration of Vocational Education and Training in Public Secondary Schools: A Study of Nzega Town Council, Tabora Region, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study looked into the integration of vocational education and training (VET) in public secondary schools in Nzega Town Council, Tabora, Tanzania. VET plays a developing vital position in providing employment opportunities for students after schooling. On the contrary, limited investment on VET would harm the young generation by producing dormant, inactive and unemployable learners. Such individuals would be unable to cope with challenges and manage the knowledge learning and application in 21st digital era. This study employed the behaviourism theory developed by John B. Watson in 1913. It adopted a mixed research approach and a convergent parallel design. A sample of 140 participants out of 597 was employed including students and teachers who were selected through simple random sampling, heads of school and District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO) who were selected purposively. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as the research instruments. Quantitative data were analysed through SPSS version 21, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The results revealed that agricultural, computer, decorating and food and nutrition are VET activities which could be integrated in public secondary schools. Also, the study found some ways of integrating VET which include: introduction of practical activities, strictly follow up of practical activities, provision of teaching and learning materials and presence of fixed timetable. VET was found to be beneficial to students as it increases skills and knowledge to the students, improve cooperation among students and teachers, enhance students' awareness on practical skills, prepares students for advanced science and technology, and easier and faster to successful career path. The study recommended that the government should increase the provision of teaching and learning materials and presence of fixed timetable for VET activities to be integrated in the schools effectively. Responsible organs from DSEO's office and quality assurance office should visit regularly public secondary schools to see how VET activities are integrated in the schools. Furthermore, heads of schools need to be creative and cooperative in planning and designing different VET activities in their schools.

Keywords: Integration, Vocational Education and Training, Secondary Schools

Introduction

Globally, vocational education and training play a vital role in developing employability skills since they allow graduates to employ themselves after school (UNESCO, 2020). In the United Kingdom for example, vocational education and training arose due to the mid-1970s economic recession, which led to inflation and increased unemployment rates. The situation led to the guiding principle debates, which authorised the government to renovate vocational education training strategies to help the youth to cope with the crisis (Cowling et al., 2015). Vocational education and training have been experienced to be beneficial to students for many years now. The effectiveness of VET offers to students' appropriate job experience, skills and knowledge, enabling them to develop their chosen careers (Misko, 2006). In German, vocational education and training system is a regulated and well-set organisation where students learn theoretical and practical content. Usually, students spend 70 percent of their time in the workplace and 30 percent in classrooms, therefore integrating and balancing theory studies with practical work (Wolter, 2017).

Experience from Turkey reveals that VET is regulated as a four – year education and training programme which is available for secondary and higher education learners (Ozer, 2019). Moreover, in some industrialised and developing countries, such as Italy, China, Sweden, and Japan, adequately fund VET programmes, exposing secondary schools to vocational training and a society of methodical application and examination at a young age (UNESCO, 2009). However, not only do students develop qualified associates during vocational education and training, but they also contact their teachers even after completing their studies, who often give them access to work information and opportunities (Neroorkar & Gopinath, 2019).

In Tanzania, the first vocational education and training school was introduced in 1968 in Tanga Region. Since then, several efforts have been made in Tanzania to make vocational education training effective. The main objective of vocational education training in Tanzania is to enhance the acquisition, development, and upgrading of the physical, mental, practical, and productive skills and knowledge needed to satisfy the transformational needs of the working industry and the economy. VET also strives to promote self-esteem, paid employment, and enhanced performance in the manufacturing and service industries (United Republic of Tanzania, 1996).

The students who acquire vocational education and training skills have important tasks to perform as they will be able to transform their acquired knowledge to develop their careers and reduce the unemployment problem, which is a global issue for youth, with around 776 million people unemployed (International Labor Organization, 2020). This concurs with UNESCO (2017) which asserted that vocational education and training give students the knowledge and abilities they need because VET in secondary schools employ

non-formal, informal, and formal learning. However, the practice is contrary to the policy directives and initiatives, as majority of VET schools are evidenced to be closed and VET activities minimally provided in schools. Limited investment on VET would impact the young generation by producing dormant, inactive and unemployable learners. Such students would be unable to cope with challenges and manage the knowledge learning, gap and application in 21st digital era. Such scenario necessitated this study to be carried out in Nzega Town Council to address the following objectives:

- i. To identify VET activities to be integrated in public secondary schools in Nzega Town Council.
- ii. To find out ways of integrating VET in public secondary schools in Nzega Town Council.
- iii. To examine benefits of integrating VET in public secondary schools in Nzega Town Council.

Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be necessary for educational stakeholders, students, teachers, and policymakers. The study intended to be helpful to the policymakers and education stakeholders in enabling them to understand the influence and contributions made by emphasizing vocational education and training in public secondary education. The outcome of this study is hoped to be helpful to teachers to provide them with information on different benefits generated for students if effective vocational education and training are integrated into their schools. The findings are also expected to create and improve students' awareness on different activities, which can be done through vocational education and training.

Scope of the Study

This study focused on the integration of vocational education and training in public secondary schools in the Nzega Town Council. The study was conducted in some public secondary schools in Nzega Town Council to enable the researchers to be able to cover a selected area within a given period. The respondents were the secondary school DSEO and head teachers because they are the ones to emphasize and make efforts on integration of VET and to teachers as they are the ones to implement vocational education and training in their schools.

Theoretical Perspectives

This study was guided by Behaviourism Theory which was developed by John. B. Watson (1878 – 1958). Watson is an American psychologist and founder of Behaviorism

Learning Theory in 1913. This theory focuses on the thought that “all behaviors are learned through interactions with the area's surroundings”. The theory is critical in this study because it allows students themselves to decide to set up specific and objective outcomes for their learning. This can be done through the interactions between the environment (vocational education and training in the schools) and the students' community context. Also, this theory enables students to focus on one goal depending on which activities they have decided to interact with. It is also simple and quick to implement because it only focuses on how students interact with the environment to produce their required knowledge and skills (Kendra, 2013). The theory relates to the study because introducing and integrating vocational education and training in students (practical education), including agricultural science, residence economics, vehicle engineering and computer knowledge, plumbing, and tailoring, will allow them directly interact with school and home environments through learning manual activities, and at the same time allowing them to learn according to the skills and knowledge which will be generated to them.

Literature Review

VET Activities which can be Integrated in Public Secondary Schools

Mohamad and Mohamad (2014) indicated that the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education offers training in nine vocational fields, which are: applied science, child education and community service, hotel service and tourism studies, construction design, business administration, electrical and electronic engineering, printing, textile and clothing, information technology, and mechanical, manufacturing, and industrial engineering which are very beneficial to be integrated in the schools. The study by Cedefop (2013) indicated that the integration of VET including agricultural activities, benefits the country through increased productivity and economic growth.

Likewise, in Tanzania the study by Luhala and Yuting (2021) pointed out that VET prepares students to be familiar with detailed careers and be professionals and experts in different career paths, for example, agriculture, food and nutrition programmes in the school. The advancement of science and technology, practical activities such as computer sciences need to be introduced and integrated in public secondary schools to develop students' careers.

Ways of Integrating VET in Public Secondary Schools

Musset (2018) designated that introducing and integrating VET needs to be adapted and other activities should be included in practical sessions, enabling students to obtain a wide range and set of skills and knowledge that can be developed in their chosen occupational career path. Additionally, in German, the study by Wolter (2017) analysed that integration of VET is strictly followed up because, through their dual education

training programme, students spend 70 percent of their time in the workplace and experience learning different practical activities to develop their careers. OECD (2021) specified that countries can support the integration and continuity of VET through providing assistance materials and teaching and learning resources in schools to maintain adaptation and the development of occupational skills that develop their careers.

Correspondingly, Ahrens et al. (2021) pointed out that government and educational stakeholders have to allow and design for the scheduling of appropriate training programmes, timetables, and professionalisation classes for VET students to develop their careers. Furthermore, Maskey (2019) in Nepal conducted a study on choosing vocational education training, and the study signified that VET has been given attention and an important position in the country's education policies in order to improve and develop students' careers. In Kenya, Wambugu, Onsomu, and Wamalwa (2009) analyzed that Kenya invests in VET in secondary and tertiary education to a great extent that it also has set suggestions on VET curricula (including syllabus and timetable) to be re-structured in relevance to the needs of the industrial world, which favour practical skills. This indicates that curriculum developers must consider restructuring the schools' syllabus and timetables to accommodate VET integration, which requires more time for practices than theories.

Benefits of Integrating VET in Public Secondary Schools

Pilz and Li (2020) see vocational education and training as a means to solve social and economic obstacles, particularly for young individuals entering the labour market and developing their careers. Several studies for instance, Shi and Bangpan (2022) on their study on young people's participation experiences in technical and vocational education and training interventions, ascertain that although VET is not fully integrated in schools, yet it is bound to play a vital role in students' financial contribution and well-being, especially in developing countries. In addition to that, Alinea's (2022) thematic literature review on industry practice gaps in Technical Vocational education and training and observed that regardless of inadequate insistence and supply of resources, VET is defined as formal and informal education and training that is critical to the growth and development of knowledge and skills of the students required by the country.

Mgabhi and Mangaliso (2019) from the Kingdom of Eswatini realized economic benefits of Vocational Education and Training, whereas VET in the Eswatini Kingdom encourages accessibility and affordability to employment opportunities to the targeted beneficiaries who are students. This influenced the Kingdom reviewing its offerings in the four regions of the country to assist both out-of-school and in-school kids in making use of such possibilities (TVET Policy, 2010). Vocational education and training prepare students for occupations or vocations that require them to engage in physical or practical labor, which will then enable them to gain direct experience in a particular set of methods or technologies depending on the vocational activities they have been performing in the

school (AICTE, 2017). In Tanzania, the study by Luhala and Yuting (2021) on the Contribution of Technical and Vocational Education Training towards Industrial Development revealed great benefits of integrating vocational education and training in secondary schools. Positive relationship between continuous vocational education and training and employment growth is said to be obtained after increasing the extent to which VET is provided in secondary schools (Mwila, 2016).

Methodology

This study was conducted in Nzega Town Council, one of the seven districts in the Tabora region. Nzega Town Council is bordered to the north by Shinyanga rural district, to the south and southwest by Uyui district, Kahama district to the west, and Igunga district on the eastern side. The total population of Nzega Town Council is 581506 people on a land area of 7,864 square kilometres (PO-RALG, 2022). The choice of Nzega Town Council was appropriate because the researchers were familiar with the area, it had appropriate schools to be selected in the study, and there are few studies conducted about the analysis in this area.

The study employed mixed research approach that combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This approach was assisted by convergent parallel design whereby the researchers merged qualitative and quantitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem.

The sample size of this study was calculated using the Yamane formula (1967) and as the result, there were 140 respondents in total out of 597 targeted population used in collecting information. Therefore, a sample of 52 teachers, 83 students, 4 heads of schools and 1 District Secondary Education Officer was used. To collect data, the study used both probability and non-probability sampling procedures. Public secondary schools were selected through simple random sampling. Furthermore, students and teachers were sampled through simple random sampling procedure. Simple random sampling was used for teachers and students as it considers all members of the population to have an equal opportunity of being chosen for the study (Christenson et al., 2014). Purposive sampling was used to select heads of schools and DSEO due to their position and understanding of vocational education training and their ability and experience to provide helpful information related to the study.

In addition, structured interview and questionnaires were used to collect qualitative and quantitative data from respondents. The instruments' superiority was sustained by presenting the interview guide and questionnaires to research experts and supervisors. Quantitative data were collected through Likert scale and open-ended questionnaires while qualitative data were collected through interview. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 21 through tables and charts while qualitative data were analyzed

thematically.

Research Findings and Discussion

This section contains demographic information about the respondents in this study. Demographic information such as gender, age, sex, working experience, education level was gathered from 52 teachers. Also, gender, age, sex and class level information were gathered from 83 students.

Table 1: Respondents demographic information for students (n=83)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Males	40	48.2
Females	43	51.8
Age		
Below 14 years	1	1.2
14-19 years	66	79.5
20 years and above	16	19.3
Class Level		
Form one	2	2.4
Form Two	30	36.1
Form Three	24	28.9
Form Four	27	32.5
Total	83	100

Source: Field Data (2023)

Findings from Table 1 reveal that 48.2 percent were males and 51.8 percent were females. Respondents' age was 1.2 percent had below 14 years old. 79.5 percent were between 14-19 years old, 19.3 percent was 20 years and above. Respondents' class level divided into three categories: form one respondents were 2.4 percent, from two were 36.1 percent, 28.9 percent were form three students and 32.5 percent were form four students. This entails that participants were young, could be sharp, and easily learn and develop their careers through the integration of VET in their schools. Also, understanding sex and gender paradigms was very beneficial to the researcher because it provided gender equity involvement and made both genders feel included and contributing to the integrated VET. At the same time, the findings demonstrated that majority of participants (61.4%) were in the right classroom categories of Form 3 and Form 4 because these are students who have been in the schools for more years and can be helpful in providing rich information about the integration of VET in their schools.

Table 2: Respondents demographic information for teachers (n=52)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Males	32	61.5
Females	20	38.5
Age		
Below 30 years	19	36.6
31-40 years	25	48.1
41-50 years	7	13.4
51 years and above	1	1.9
Highest Education Level		
Certificate	4	7.7
Diploma	16	30.8
Bachelor Degree	32	61.5
Working Experience		
Below 5 years	31	59.6
6-10 years	15	28.9
11-20years	5	9.6
21 years and above	1	1.9
Total	52	100

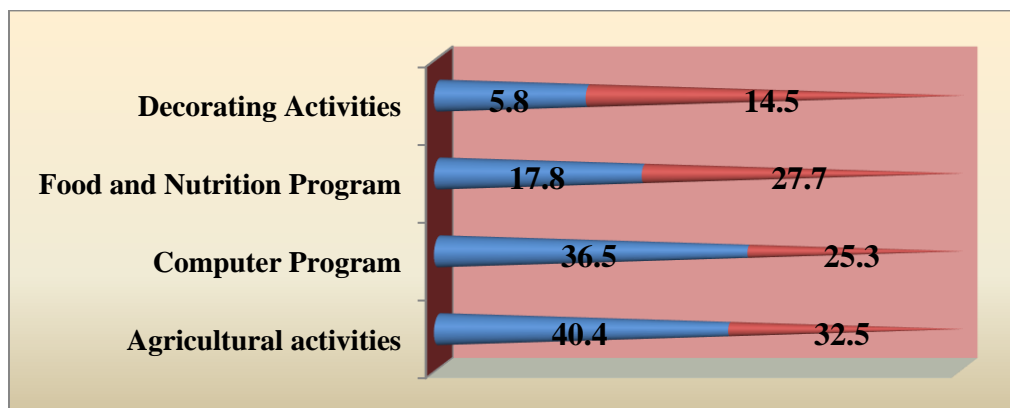
Source: Field Data (2023)

Findings from Table 2 indicate that 61.5 percent were males and 38.5 were females. Respondents' age was 36.6 percent below 30 years old. 48.1 percent were between 31-40, 13.4 percent was between 41-50 years old and 1.9 percent was above 50 years. Respondents' level of education was divided into three categories: 7.7 percent had certificate in education, diploma in education was 30.8 percent and bachelor degree in education was 61.5 percent. Finally, the study evaluated the respondents' teaching experience. 59.6 had below 5 years of experience, 28.9 had 6-10 years of experience, 9.6 percent had 11-20 years of experience and 1.9 percent had 21 years and above of experience. Majority of respondents fall between 30 and 40 years, and this suggests that most secondary school teachers in the study area were aged enough, enthusiastic and energetic people who may have positive attitudes and support for integrating VET in their schools. This concurs with the study by Elstad and Christophersen (2017), who reported that teachers who are young and energetic are to be integrated into VET activities with a higher level of skills. Also, participants at 59.6 percent had less than five years in the school, but majority of them claimed to have not attended any VET professional development session. Such scenario, is regarded as a call to the government that more

training, seminars, and workshops should be conducted with the teachers to provide them with knowledge and skills concerning the integration of VET in secondary schools. Additionally, the researchers interviewed heads of schools and the District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO) to obtain their opinions on integration of VET in public secondary schools.

VET Activities Which Could Be Integrated in Secondary Schools

The first objective sought to find out the VET activities that can be integrated in schools. Respondents' concerns and interests were considered in determining the activities in accordance to the community demands. The summary of findings is presented in Figure 1 below:



Source: Field data (2023)

Key: Blue indicates teachers' responses, Red indicates students' responses

Figure 1: Responses on VET activities to be integrated in public secondary schools

Agricultural Activities

These findings indicate that agriculture is proposed as among VET activity, which was pinpointed by the participants to be integrated into their schools. 40.4percent of teachers and 32.5percent of students proposed this activity. The study shows that agricultural skills developed at school will enable students to learn about the benefits of food protection, how to appropriately handle and store food, and the different food-borne illnesses. The above questionnaire findings were supplemented by interview findings from heads of schools and District Secondary Education Officer. For example, when interviewee C asked on VET activities to be integrated in the schools, pinpointed that:

Agriculture is the most practical and physical activity which can be integrated in our school because there is enough area for such training to take place and students are

motivated to do this kind of activity because yields obtained are used to make food for them in the school (Interviewee C, 4th August 2023).

This implies the integration of agriculture as one of the practical activities of VET that can be provided in schools. These findings relate to the study by Cedefop (2013), who indicated that integration of VET, including agricultural activities, benefits the country through increased productivity and economic growth.

Food and Nutrition Programme

Food and nutrition activities are also mentioned VET activities that can be integrated in public secondary schools to develop students' careers. 17.8 percent of teachers and 27.7 percent of students preferred food and nutrition courses to be taught in the school to develop their careers. Food and nutrition activities can be very helpful to students in making healthy food since it provides nutritional knowledge and understanding that enables them to choose, arrange, organise, and understand how to serve up nutrition meals. The respondents' responses show that students need to be given effective training on nutrition and food, which will enable them to develop their careers and improve their life standards and health issues. The study implies that proper provision of nutrition and food programmes will improve both VET skills and diet or feeding among students, which will later promote their health and academic achievement. These findings tally with the study of Luhala and Yuting (2021), who analysed that VET prepares students to be familiar with detailed careers and be professionals and experts in different career paths, for example, food and nutrition programmes in the school.

Computer Science Programme

From the findings, 36.5 percent of teachers and 25.3 percent of students commented on computer science program as the VET activity to be integrated in the school. Through computer programmes in schools, students are expected to be more engaged in science and technology issues, which are very important in our today changing industry world. The results entail that VET integration can be done in public secondary schools, and computer science programmes are suggested to be effectively integrated in schools because, in some schools, the programme is integrated but not effectively. Additional findings were tapped from interview with head teachers and District Secondary Education Officer. During interview, interviewee A had this to say:

Computer program is one of best practical education and training which can be integrated in our school. This is because it helps students in acquiring skills and knowledge which are very beneficial in our changing world. Although we have few computers in our school, provision of more resources will ensure effective integration of VET in the school (Interviewee A, 18th

July 2023).

The vivid notion and consideration from the above findings are that, without sound computer education and skills, VET could not be well implemented in this digitalized world. This concurs with previous findings from the study of Luhala and Yuting (2021), who indicate that due to the advancement of science and technology, practical activities such as computer sciences need to be introduced and integrated in public secondary schools to develop students' careers.

Decorating Activities

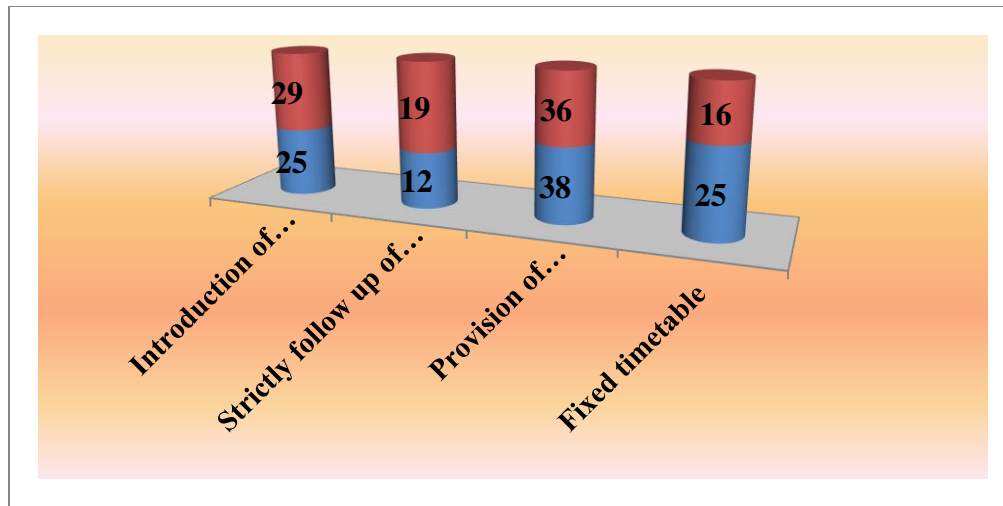
Findings in figure 1 show the decorating activity also as the VET activity that can be integrated with public secondary students in developing their careers towards their chosen path. 8.5 percent and 14.5 percent of teachers and students respectively proposed on this activity. This entails those decorating activities, which widen the career choices if they can be integrated into public secondary schools, can also develop students' career paths. Moreover, heads of schools and DSEO confirmed the same in an interview when one respondent said that:

Decorating activity in public secondary schools is very beneficial to the students as it allows them to have knowledge and skills on designing, fashion and other related activities which will enable them developing their chosen career for further progress (Interviewee B, 20th July 2023).

These findings concur with the study in Japan, which indicated that vocational high schools offer programmes in various fields including computer technology, fashion, agriculture, technology engineering, commerce and business, and home economics (Mohamad & Mohamad, 2014).

Ways of Integrating Vocational Education and Training

This objective intended to find out ways which can be used in integrating vocational education and training effectively in public secondary schools. The question was presented to both teachers and students in subsection as presented in Figure 2 below:



Source: Field data (2023)

Key: Blue indicates teachers' response, Red indicates students' response

Figure 2: Responses on ways of integrating vet in public secondary schools

Introduction of Practical Activities

In findings' considerations, the results indicate that this is among the best ways of integrating VET in schools where all students should be exposed to practical activities and integrate them into their normal daily studies. 25 percent of teachers and 29 percent of students recommended on this on this way to effectively integrate VET in their schools. Several respondents described that the introduction of practical activities in public secondary schools can be one of the ways of integrating effective VET in the schools. In connection to that, during interview the heads of schools and the DSEO affirmed the validity of the proceeding findings. As it was evidenced by interviewee D was quoted saying that:

The introduction and presence of practical activities in the schools is accelerating the performance and achievement of VET activities because students are introduced and exposed to other programs apart from the classroom studies. For example, introduction of computer studies in my school has been motivating them so much in learning this practical skill and increases their experiences in this program (Interviewee D, 7th August 2023).

This means that the presence of practical activities in their schools is important in accelerating the performance of VET activities because students will be introduced to and exposed to other programmes apart from classroom studies, which will develop their careers in one way or another. These results concur with the study of Musset (2018), who indicated that introducing and integrating VET needs to be adapted and other activities should be included in practical sessions, enabling students to obtain a wide set of skills and

knowledge that can be developed in their chosen occupational career path.

Strict Follow-Up of Practical Skills

The findings also revealed that after the introduction of practical activities in public secondary schools, management and monitoring of the progresses are vital. 12 percent of teachers and 19 percent of students had positive notion towards this way. This illustrates that there should be strict follow-up of the practical skills and knowledge to observe if these activities are effectively integrated and followed as intended by the government. The results further indicated that, when there is strict follow-up to see if these activities are integrated as they are supposed to be, VET would be integrated to a great extent in public secondary schools in Nzega Town Council. Both teachers and students need to be strictly monitored in integrating practical skills and activities in the school. A corresponding notion was accessed during interview sessions with heads of schools and the DSEO. That is evidenced in an interview with interviewee B who raised that:

Students and sometimes teachers tend not to take into serious considerations other practical skills introduced in the schools rather than the normal classroom subjects. Therefore, strict follow ups of the practical skills activities which can be integrated in the schools is an essential way of integrating vocational education and training in public secondary schools in Nzega Town Council (Interviewee B, 20th July 2023).

The findings concur with the study by Wolter (2017), who stated that VET is strictly followed up in German because, through their dual education training programme, students spend 70 percent of their time in the workplace and experience learning different practical activities to develop their careers.

Provision of Teaching and Learning Materials

Findings revealed that 38 percent of teachers and 36 percent of students requires teaching and learning materials for VET activities to be integrated in their schools. These findings demonstrate that the presence of enough provision of teaching and learning materials can be one of the most accelerating ways in integrating VET in their schools. Moreover, VET teaching and learning resources are really needed for the best possible education. VET teachers need enough stationeries, sufficient teaching raw materials, updated textbooks on a particular activity, and plenty of teaching assistance to support the relevance of the programme. Linking to the above questionnaires' findings, during interview the heads of schools and the DSEO supported the rationality of the going on findings. As it was evidenced by Interviewee E who had this to say:

VET teaching and learning resources are really in need for best possible education. VET teachers need enough stationeries, sufficient teaching raw materials, updated textbooks on a particular activity and plenty of teaching assistance to support the relevance

of the program. (Interviewee E, 9th August 2023).

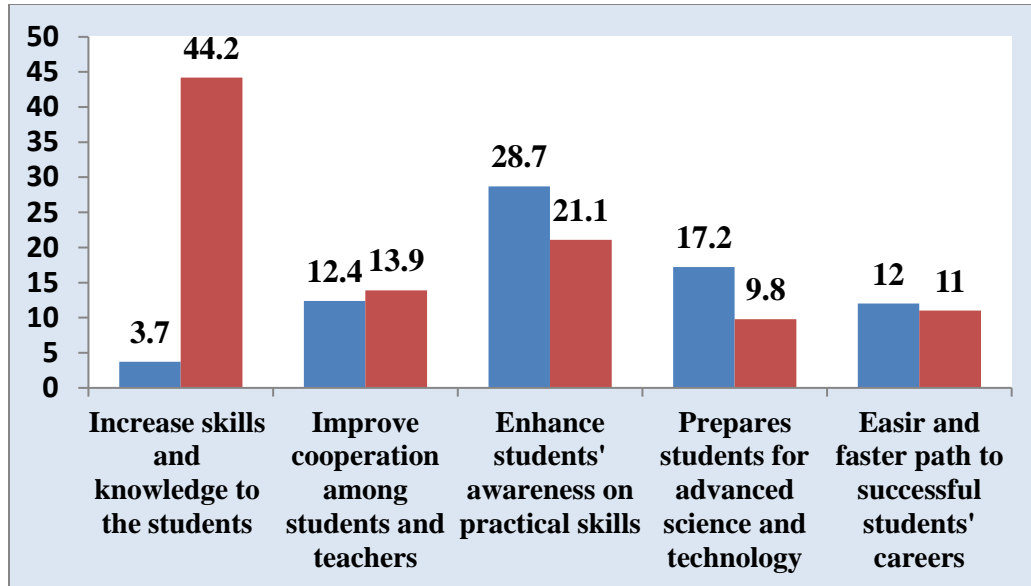
This implies that VET can only be effectively integrated into schools when the number of teaching and learning resources is increased to support that. The finding coincided with the study by the OECD (2021), which specified that countries can support the integration and continuity of VET through providing adequate assistance materials and teaching and learning resources in schools to maintain adaptation and the development of occupational skills that develop their careers.

Fixed Timetable

25 percent of teachers and 16 percent of students' responses also support the arrangement of a fixed timetable as one of the ways of integrating vocational education and training in the schools. VET can be well integrated in the schools if there is a fixed school timetable to support that, just like any other study being provided in the schools. The findings concur with the study of Ahrens et al. (2021), who pointed out that government and educational stakeholders have to allow and design for the scheduling of appropriate training programmes, timetables, and professionalization classes for VET students to develop their careers.

Benefits of Integrating VET in Public Secondary Schools

The last objective of the study asked heads of school, teachers, students and the DEO to examine benefits which will be obtained through integrating VET in public secondary schools. The results are obtained in Figure 3 below:



Source: Field data (2023)

Key: Blue indicates teachers' response. Red indicates students' response

Figure 3: Responses on benefits of integrating VET in public secondary schools

Increase Skills and Knowledge to the Students

The results identified increasing of students' skills and knowledge as the benefits of integrating VET in public secondary schools. Skills and knowledge of practical VET activities are keys to students' career development. 48.2 percent and 32.7 percent of teachers and students respectively pinpointed this as the advantage of integrating VET in public schools. Additional results were tapped from the interview with heads of schools and the DSEO as interviewee D was quoted saying; "Students are able to develop their careers through vocational education and training provided since knowledge and skills provided will help them doing so" (Interviewee D, 7th August 2023).

The findings imply that VET in Nzega Town Council is perceived to increase skills and knowledge, especially in practical activities in public secondary schools. Therefore, it calls for all schools to ensure that VET is integrated into their daily learning and practices. This corresponds with the findings by Mghabi and Mangaliso (2019), which show that integration of VET in schools provides students with self-employment creation skills and upgrades their knowledge and skills for students' career development.

Improve Cooperation among Students and Teachers

16.9 percent of teachers and 15.4 percent of students' results pointed out enhancing

and improvement of cooperation among students as the benefit of integrating VET. The findings present that respondents' suggestions on the integration of VET in Nzega Town Council agreed that this may enable them to improve their cooperation in these activities outside of classroom studies. Likewise, students become happier and cooperate more appropriately in VET activities. Moreover, heads of schools and the DSEO approved the same in an interview, whereby an interviewee B evidenced that:

VET is a good practice to be integrated in public secondary schools because it will enable students cooperate each other in different practical activities. Cooperation will enhance their awareness and make their path clear toward their career development. Also, cooperation between teachers and students is expected to be enhanced when they meet outside the classroom" (Interviewee B, 20th July 2023).

This means that the integration of VET in schools is crucial in improving cooperation among students and teachers. The findings have the implication that focusing on and allowing interaction between students and teachers helps develop and improve cooperation between them. The finding correlates with the guiding theory of the study, which is the behaviourism theory of John B. Watson (1878–1958), introduced in 1913, which allows interaction between students and the environment and even between students and students.

Enhance Students' Awareness of Practical Skills

On the other hand, the findings in Figure 3 show that enhancing students' awareness of practical skills is one of the benefits of the integration of VET in schools as 24.1 percent of teachers and 32.7 percent of students have mentioned this. Students need to be aware of various practical activities corresponding to VET because they are very essential in developing their chosen career path. An agreeing idea was accessed during interview sessions with the heads of schools and DSEO. The following quotation from interviewee A approved that:

VET is important on creating and enhancing awareness on practical activities because it provides practical experiences which prepare students to become good participants of practical activities in their society and developing their careers through those practical activities (Interviewee C, 4th August 2023).

This finding implies that students' awareness of practical skills is a strong factor that can be used to enhance VET practices in Nzega Town Council. Students need to be well prepared for accommodating VET practices so that they develop well and enhance their academic outcomes in the long run. Alike, vocational education and training prepare students for positions that necessitate them to be connected in physical or practical activities and improve their awareness, which will enable them to gain direct experience in their chosen career (AICTE, 2017).

Prepares Students for Advanced Science and Technology Skills

However, the findings show that respondents suggest that vocational education and training prepare students for advanced science and skills. This is supported by 10.8 percent of teachers and 19.2 percent of students revealed from the findings. The above questionnaire findings were complemented by interview findings from heads of schools and DSEO. For instance, when interviewee A was asked on the benefits of integrating VET in their schools had this to say:

Integration of VET in our public secondary schools provides a room for students to prepare themselves for advanced science and technological knowledge which are very essential in the changing industry world. These skills and knowledge on science and technology involve practical VET activities are key in students' career development (Interviewee A, 18th July 2023).

This means that vocational education and training are very crucial to students' career development because the majority of the respondents have claimed that VET prepares students for advanced science and technology. This finding relates to the review that was done by the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, which was mainly made to smooth progress and enlarge the attainment of life skills and knowledge needed to meet the changing world industry and economy (NACTVET, 2022).

Easier and Fast Path for the Successful Careers of Students

Responses from the study also found that integrating VET in public secondary schools, benefits students and creates an easier path for the successful careers of students. The findings have positive implications for how students develop continuing employment skills after secondary school. It is obvious that a student with VET skills will likely be in a better position to join higher-learning vocational schools and have more employability opportunities in the community and country at large. The results concur with the study that was conducted in Denmark, which indicated that integration of VET in secondary education helps students have an easier path to their successful careers because it creates a positive relationship between employment growth and continuous vocational education and training obtained in secondary schools (Mwila, 2016).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that agricultural activities, computer courses, decorating courses, and food and nutrition courses are activities that can be integrated into public secondary schools. Moreover, introduction of practical activities in the schools,

strict follow-up of practical skills, provision of teaching and learning resources relating to VET integration, and a fixed timetable are the ways used in ensuring integration of VET in public secondary schools. From the findings, the researchers also concluded that VET has benefits for students' career development because it adds knowledge and skills to practical activities, develops cooperation between students and teachers, and enhances students' awareness of practical activities, prepares students for advanced science and technology and creates an easier and fast path for successful career of students.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the central government should allocate enough funds in public secondary schools to allow them integrate different VET activities in their schools. It also recommends that policymakers also need to ensure the designing and structuring of a proper curriculum that will support and enhance the integration of VET in public secondary schools. District Secondary Education Officers should visit regularly public secondary schools in their districts to see how VET activities are done and integrated in the schools. Furthermore, heads of schools need to be creative and cooperative. This signifies that they should plan and design some different VET activities to be run by the school that will help the school develop their students' careers instead of waiting for the government to provide them with all the necessary things to be involved in the integration of VET.

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