

Assessment of parents' and youths' perceptions about vocational education and training in Tanzania: a case study of ilala district

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The main objective of this study was to assess the parents' and youths' perceptions about Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the country, and also to investigate whether these perceptions are influenced by socio-demographic variables. Ilala Municipal Tanzania, was taken as a case study. The specific objectives were to examine how the parents' and youths' perceive about entry qualifications and willingness to allow their children to undergo VET, gauge parents' and youths' perceptions about the importance of VET in a developing economy, determine parent's perceptions about encouraging their children to join VET, establish parent's and youth's awareness about the progress in higher learning through VET. Lastly determines the occupations that are most preferred by parents' and youths in VET. A sample of 281 respondents, 181 youths from VETA Chang'ombe and VETA Kipawa and 100 parents randomly sampled among the youths' with their respective courses by assuming that they live with their parents or guardians were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. Data analysis based on descriptive statistics and positivist assumptions dominated the interpretation of the results, which is quantitative and independent of a researcher. The research findings deduced that, there is generally positive response attached to VET as an alternative route to academic studies. Indeed, 80% of the respondents strongly agree that anyone can join VET, regardless of their academic background. Furthermore, the majority of the parents, represented by 70.1% of the respondents, strongly agreed that one should feel proud to join VET, and 68% of the respondents strongly agreed that parents gladly encouraged their children to join VET. Meanwhile, 74% of the respondents strongly agreed that VET is very important in economic development. Finally, most preferred occupations by parents and youths in VET were electrical installation and computer skills followed by carpentry and joinery. However, the study revealed that only 48.4% of the respondents know that after completion of VET one can join further studies. This implies that although both parents' and youths have a favourable perception concerning VET, slightly less than half of them are aware that one can still go on to join further studies after completing VET. It is recommended that investments be made by the government and that the private sectors in promoting a conducive environment in VET centres, and they should take this as an

opportunity for updating the public on the kind of knowledge to be gained from various areas of specialization. Finally, it has to be pointed out that the most important policy implication of this study, is that serious measures and steps need to be taken to sensitize VET programs to the public. The community should be made to understand that to acquire vocational skills should be taken as first priority and not as a last option mainly for failures from formal education. Society has to realize that the situation has now changed and that vocational skills will be a catalyst in improving economic development.