

SELF-EMPLOYMENT BY TVET GRADUATES YOUNG PEOPLE FROM TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN RWANDA

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Abstract: Despite Rwanda great geographic, cultural and demographic diversity, it shares many challenges and issues that are fundamental to improving the quality and relevance of TVET as a means of human resources development. Rwanda must consider a coherent strategy for human development in which TVET plays an important role. Among the critical issues that must be considered when planning TVET programs to develop Rwanda, human resources are the following: Population growth and urbanization; poverty and lack of income-generating capacity; increase demands for literacy and secondary and technical education; and pollution and environmental degradation. The Education Sector Policy was developed in 2003. Since then several sub-sector policies have/are being developed and TVET is one of them. TVET comprises of all fields of initial and continuing Technical and Vocational Education and Training. It covers all kinds and levels of trades offered/to be offered in Rwanda. Interest of researcher is to identify the journeys into self-employment taken by TVET graduates young people from Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Rwanda. Researcher engaged qualitative method throughout this work and different literature documents related to the topic were reviewed. The sample size was 35 graduates of all graduates and school officers of TVET secondary schools in Burera district. Questionnaire, interview and observation were used as research tools to collect information from the field.

Keywords: Despite Rwanda great geographic, technical education, Education Sector Policy, TVET.

1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

According to the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Human Resources Development: The case of Tumba College of Technology (TCT)-Rwanda.

Name of first author: Engr. Ayuba Anza Usman MNSE Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) refers to education and training that prepares persons for gainful employment (Finch and Crunkilton 1999). In other words, TVET refers to deliberate interventions to bring about learning which would make people more productive (or simply adequately productive) in designated areas of economic activity (e.g., economic sectors, occupations, specific work tasks). TVET has the potential to enhance human capabilities and enlarge peoples 'choices. The benefits of TVET need to be more equitably distributed between men and women, and between rural and urban areas.

The beginning of TVET is difficult to trace as it connotes skills and competencies which have been embedded in surplus of other histories. The perception of the origin of TVET by many is in diverse ways. However, general education and training began in pre-history with the transmission of knowledge and culture from one generation to the next. The use of tools, beginning with those made from stones, evolved as humans evolved. In the pre-historic *hunting and gathering* society, skills were passed from parent to child as members of small, usually related, migratory groups.

Research Objective

1) To identify the journeys into self-employment taken by TVET graduates young people from Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Rwanda.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

OBJECTIVES OF TVET POLICY

The overriding objective is quality of life.

TVET is a most effective means for society to develop its member's potentials to respond to the challenges of the future. However, schools and other institutions of the formal education system alone cannot achieve education and training for sustainable development in terms of human resources. In most African countries, oversight responsibility for TVET is shared in general between the ministries responsible for education or technical education and labor or employment, although some specialized vocational training programme (in agriculture, health, transport, etc.) fall under the supervision of the sector ministries.

Rwanda scenario for human resources development through TVET

In spite of Rwanda great geographic, economic, cultural and demographic diversity, it shares many common challenges and issues that are fundamental to improving the quality and relevance of TVET to gain a competitive edge in the market economy of the 21st century. Rwanda must consider a coherent strategy for human capital development in which TVET plays an important role. However, in order to effectively tackle this problem, human resource development plans must be clearly cast within, and simultaneously linked to, the economic development vision of Rwanda.

The success of TVET in any developing country can be considered a key indicator of the country's advancement in development. Any country that evolved into a technological advanced one, TVET must have played an active and vital role, as skilled manpower would have been required, also to enable its sustainability.

In Rwanda, Science and Technology in education is also emerging as a key priority area within the sector, recognizing its role in human resource development for Rwanda. This forward-looking plan, based on declared targets and indicators is an instrument to make the Education Sector Policy operational and is designed to assist in reducing poverty within Rwanda while creating a foundation for our vision of economic development based upon applications of development skills and technology.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES OF DATA

Methodology

The research is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from respondents from the chosen area of study comprising of the beneficiaries of training programmes. The researcher identified young individuals who are graduates from vocational training institutions. The total number of interviewees was ninety two (92) respondents from Kabona TVET School in Burera District and Government officials. This helped the researcher to collect data on the importance of TVET policy implementation in TVET schools in Burera District. This may help to assess the quality of the education system provided by the vocational training education institutions in Rwanda and was able to capture information on the perceptions of young people on the standards of the education system provided to them, after they graduate and how it is helpful or inadequate in as far as labor market is concerned.

Research design

Cohen and Manion (1995) are of the view that in qualitative design, the researcher does not know or predict the outcome of a design as in quantitative inquiry where the outcome of a research is already determined. This is because in quantitative research, the researcher has a specific hypothesis in mind and can determine the outcome of the study whereas in qualitative inquiry, the design emerges as the study unfolds.

Best (1991) also study that it is worth mentioning that whatever can be learned at a particular time and setting are determined by the nature and types of interactions that go on between the inquirer, the people and the setting, this is not predictable until the researcher has witnessed the events.

As McMillan and Schumacher (1993) explain, qualitative research requires a plan for choosing sites and participants, and for beginning data collection. According to them, the plan is an emergent design in which each incremental research decision depends on prior information. The emergent design may in reality, seem circular as processes of purposeful sampling, data collection plan, and partial and final data analysis plans are simultaneous and interactive rather than discrete sequential steps.

Research deals with Rwanda TVET policy and its impacts on school leaver's welfare .It uses qualitative research methods with questionnaire administration, observation and personal interviews to collect data on Rwanda TVET policy implementation and its impact on school leaver's welfare in Burera District.

These approaches were accepted because they accessible the best means of obtaining valid data for the study. The advantages of the research methods and tools far are more important than their disadvantages in sourcing and analyzing data from the field.

Study population

According to Polit & Becks (2008), a research population comprises all individuals or objects with common defining characteristics.This study focus on TVET graduates secondary schools in Burera District. VET School graduates are classified in three categories such as Carpentry graduates, mastery graduates and welding graduates. TVET Secondary school graduates in BURERA District are (2018) graduates during three years. This study meets with the population because all populations are involved in the study.

Research techniques

Interviews

To get primary data, it was decided to interview 92 respondents. Before holding interviews with respondents, the researcher had first to make contacts with the help of telephone calls. Using interview guide, the researcher interviewed 30 young self-employed people in Burera District. To know what the government is doing or planning for self employment for young people in Rwanda, 2 officials from the School Administration, 2 officials from the Ministry of Education. Semi-structured interviews each lasting for up 30-35 minutes were conducted. The interview questions varied in form and emphasis based on the interviewee but was based on the research questions mentioned above. In some cases, some prompts were incorporated, for example, around the nature of self-employment and the transition of young people as a starting point for informants giving their views about self-employment as a form of employment in the labor market.

With respect to the qualitative practice (Davies: 1997), a mostly unrestricted/open-ended interview timetable was used to guide the conversation and discussion. The interview calendar was purposefully considered to allow informants to articulate/express themselves unreservedly and to raise their personal issues and concerns relating to the transition of young people towards self- employment in the real world of work.

The interview schedules helped very the researcher to understand as well as studying the attitudes, values, beliefs and motives the young people have in as far as self-employment is concerned. The study interviews were conducted in English, but in some cases Kinyarwanda (local language) was used, with the interview transcripts which were translated into English afterwards.

Desk study

For the concern of secondary data collection, a desk study was used. The study concentrated on secondary data from diverse sources, but mainly from the ISS/Erasmus University library, official government publications/documents from Rwanda related to the issue of investigation, Internet sources was very crucial among other sources, Many reports and other relevant sources were also consulted during the research paper writing period.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Forms of economic activities for TVET School graduates sampled in Rusarabuye Sector of Burera District

Table 4.1: Economic activities of respondents and their sex distribution

Economic activity	Number of respondents	
	Male	Female
House construction	5	0
Welding	2	0
Carpentry	2	0

Source: Primary data,2019

From Table 4.1, it is observable that many economic activities are occupied solely by males. This portrays the bias against females in labor markets especially in the field of self-employment. Female respondents argued that they cannot join some economic activities such as mechanics, electricity, welding and construction because these activities require extra physical energies (masculinity) and much attention. One female respondent had to say that; *“I joined hair dressing because I was advised by parents and they told me that because I am energetically weak, I should go for hair dressing”*. This clearly illustrates the traditional beliefs that female are born weak and thus should always join economic activities that need less energy and consequently leads to gender discrimination in labor markets.

From the interviews held with respondents from Burera District, they noted that the forms of economic activities occupied by TVET young graduates from vocational training institutions include; construction of houses, plumbing, electricity, welding, catering, tailoring, carpentry, electrical installation, solar technology . Most of the respondents argued that they spend much time without securing any job. The reasons they put forward is that they lack money to start their own business.

Respondents mentioned that they spend a good number of years like 2-3 (average) years before being self-employed. Majority of respondents noted that they start off their work by working for other enterprises or other business men as an alternative to accumulate skills and money that would help them graduate from working for others to self-employment.

Economic journeys of TVET graduates young people to self-employment

Initial steps to self-employment

Some of young people interviewed revealed that in their early lives they were exposed to unsuccessful business practices through their parents and their close friends’ standard of living known as rural that is often characterized by Agriculture, and they subsequently got out from it to technical schools. Their comments about the beginnings of their individual businesses represent their spirit of creativity and innovation confidence as well as the self commitment in themselves and their observations of their world. One of the respondents and also chair person of the association of mechanics of motor vehicles described his initial steps in the journey to economic self-sufficiency in these words: *“I knew intellectually what I was supposed to do but it was not very easy as there was still a lack of money. However, by observing the rural standard of living, events had been occurred that led me to the subsequent steps to self employment; the personal revelation as an eye opener let me know that the time was right to go ahead to cater for my own business”*. Hence myself commitment

Case study 1



Figure 1: A self-employed manager of house construction.

Source: Primary data, 2019

Nizeyimana Jean de Dieu in Figure 1 is 30 years old and he is a house construction manager, he noted:” after school i had a passion to utilize my skills and knowledge got from school. To him based on his historical background in the field of house construction, he succeeded after a long journey of several struggles, he noted; “I decided to go for self-employment

because I had been looking for a job for a period of two years and one could ask me how many times I have been applying and getting nowhere in the formal sector. Some of us decided to go for self-employment and it worked well because I myself am able to perform in whatever condition and yet I started from nowhere. I certainly depended on sacrificing some of the basic needs of life and every little earning I could get from part-time a job which was not even static, for several instances I was underpaid. I had three friends of mine who could lend me some little money and equipments during weekends and after one year, I bought a few of mine and as you can see my work-station is growing and this is an outcome of my endurance as it is seen in my trainees. Again, he argued that, he also started his own company for two years, and of course he did not start with enough customers' skilled in house construction. He says: i used my own skills interventions cheap and affordable to every category of people because, I was working from a place close to the bigger enterprise (construction of modern houses headed by an engineer) which had existed for year's back, which could often expose me to merciless competition. It is not easy to become a manager of any enterprise alone in life and as a young graduate of TVET, I certainly had to look for other colleagues of mine through social-networks whenever difficulties occurred on some tasks and it really works fine. The whole business survived alongside my personal determination and commitment and endurance”.

This reflection makes people to understand that, there are several ways regarding taking economic journeys to self-employment, that it involves selling the skills and knowledge learnt from the training to the buyers. This reflection explains the reason why some people take longer journeys into their success to self-employment when others take relatively shorter journeys.

Case study 2: A self employed carpenter



Source: Primary data,2019

Dushimirimana Daniel in Figure 2 is a twenty nine years old self-employed carpenter. He is one of TVET young graduates and he specialized in carpentry as his training profession. He explained the steps and journeys he took to reach where he is today as a self-employed carpenter. He noted that, “Despite the hectic part of it, I do enjoy my profession as a carpenter irrespective of the long journey it took me to reach where I am today”. What was your immediate job after the training? My father had a friend who had a big carpentry workshop close to “BUTARO CENTRER” market and he requested him to employ me on a basis that I get used to the labor market after graduation from TVET. I worked there for a period of one year. I made very nice chairs, doors and windows and they were sold expensive. Then, my employer

begun to recognize me as one of the best carpenters he has ever employed in his workshop but he underpaid me. I convinced my parents to sell one of our domestic animals (2pigs and one 1 bull cow) in order for me to purchase carpentry equipments and registration of my business. I did everything fine and it took me three years to become a self-employed carpentry. As you can see

these chairs am making, It is an offer I got from “*TWIHESHE AGACIRO*” restaurant to make thirty six chairs (36) and many more have come and hopefully my business will continue to grow big. I started with the total amount of money worth \$1200, and of now I have an estimated amount of money worth \$7000 cash at my saving bank account. And I made this amount in three years out of taking the risk to sell off one of our domestic animals and now I am confident that I can replace them.

As a point of reflection on Dushimirimana Daniel’s economic journey to self-employment, This implies that, the skills and knowledge acquired from training specifically for some occupations such as carpentry, Masonry and house construction are very useful in supporting them to join the labor market.

Case study3: A Self-employed welder



Source: Primary data,2019

Hakuzimana Jean Sauveur is a self employed welder at Kirambo centre, he noted that, after school he had a passion to utilize his skills and knowledge, to him based on his historical background in the field of welding, he was able to succeed after a long journey of several struggles, he noted; “I decided to go for self-employment because I had been looking for a job for a period of three years for vain. He said:

“The only person that I would mention in myself employment journey is my father and my eldest brother who are key to parts of my journey to self employment. Their support and vision increased my strength and confidence. So I cannot simply say that, I sat down and planned for everything but it was a brotherhood spirit that made me who I am today”. These days I make metallic doors and windows and I am able to repair all destroyed metals as well as sharpening metal tools for earning money.

The respondent noted that, my father believes that I present that intention sounding broad for him. I consider that I present that for him without delay, that objective judgment, that ability to stand behind and to look and say, “Fine”, from an emotional point of view, It is easy to sense how you could say this, but from an entrepreneurship point of view. Hence my father tried to support me in terms of money to start up myself employment.

The Support Network

The respondents identified their family and friends, both in body and in spirit, as being integral components of their support networks to self-employment: Here one respondent Ufitinema Anatalia had said:

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Informal Learning Modalities.

Some respondents were interviewed at the labor of work and the findings showed how they were skilled informally.

They were also reflected on having “hands-on” practical learning situations proceeding to becoming sole proprietors of their businesses. Respondents’ experience with self-employment began as they were still young. As stated Manishimwe Emmanuel as one respondent: *“I started having my own properties since my junior school schooling while I studied the Entrepreneurship subject. My father had a cattle that I often fed (caws, goats and hens). Hence I asked my parents to give me my own goat for later school furniture. This is the only way through which I used to develop the inner spirit of ownership which led me to this current improved life of feeding three modern caws which give enough milk for earning money. These days I sell between 60 and 70 liters of milk per day.*

The Preparation for Self-employment

The young interviewed respondents in this study described their preparation for self-employment/entrepreneurship as a journey enriched by many formal skills and self-experiences. Respondents revealed that their learning to self-employment was a directed learning which took place as a result of their internal motivations, needs, and the consequential experiences. Respondents reiterate the sentiment that much of their learning relating to their area of entrepreneurial expertise was the result of their own personal pursuit interwoven with skills, knowledge and experience. One of the respondents argued that: *“I suppose even the education that I had, to the technical and vocational education and training level, sufficed adequate for me to have what it took to stay alive in the world of work and business. The world of business working for someone else, and the world of business doing my personal/businesses /any form of economic activity. I understand that it was not something that I was trained for, that is to say; from any form of training and schooling I went through. I can consider this as part of life to me. I have experienced this throughout my life. I think I was equipped for things that people get equipped for academically. I cannot think of it as exactly as educational, at every level education one obtains. Personally I judge it as a total experience an individual can possess, and this is what has taken me all the way through”.*

Vision and Spirituality

Fundamental to the success of their business enterprises, some respondents describe spirituality as being the most important factor contributing to their prosperity in as far as self-employment is concerned. Some respondents normally referred to God as they talk about their entrepreneurial endeavors: One of the respondents who have a construction company concludes with this sentiment:

“the vision of this construction company has followed me all my life. The vision for where I am now was very clear in my mind long before the possibility of it was imagined.”

It noted that, business literacy includes skills that use financial and business information to understand and make decisions that lead an enterprise to success (Business Literacy Institute, 2002). The inherent business flair (a natural talent) of the young people interviewed can be understood from the observations prepared by members of their social network/set of connections. As revealed by respondents family support and other assistance provided by family friends bear justifications to their organizational skills in their projects/businesses. For instance the respondent Ingabire Serafine assumes:

“When I was young, I worked part-time for my uncle. He taught me a lot about business. He advised me to beware of getting into debt. There is a quick way to make a buck, and the only way to get ahead is by hard work. Whatever fill you go into, it is important to have someone acknowledgeable to talk to and learn from him or her all the days of your life into business”

This reflection helped me to understand how well the young people from technical and vocational education and training integrate their values as they relate to family life experiences combined with the culture of a successful professional. The ideas also portray the young people get raised in such an environment as they grow up to appreciate these values, name them among their many gifts, and are more likely to become entrepreneurs.

5. CONCLUSION

The research findings from the interviewed young people from earlier TVET schools noted that, the most popular economic journeys taken by the young people in the labor market is by personal initiatives, social networks such as family ties and friends. The majority of the respondents reported that, young people completely take different steps but with similar attitudes and vision to become self-employed. The study revealed that there is no clear pathway to self-employment for young people in Rwanda but what is unique with the young graduates of TVET, is that, they are determined and willing to take up self-employment. The interviewed young people revealed that their chances to take up wage employment are limited.

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