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Abstract

Purpose: The objective of the study was to explore the intervening effect of institutional characteristics on the relationship between training practices and the performance of bachelors of business courses graduates from Technical Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) accredited universities in Kenya.

Methodology: The study was anchored on Human Capital Theory and Cognitive Learning Theory. The study was guided by the positivism philosophical orientation. The study adopted a descriptive cross section survey design. The unit of analysis was bachelor of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in Kenya. Through snowballing of Industry Based Learning (IBL) Reports submitted by students in each of the six TVETA accredited universities in Kenya. Through the graduates, their employers or managers, who were the unit of observation of the graduates' performance was obtained. Purposive and systematic snowballing sampling techniques were used to draw a sample for the study. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire and a Google form. The data was analyzed using multi-linear regression model. The statistical package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27 was utilized to analyze the data.

Findings: The findings of the study suggest that institutional characteristics have a partial intervening influence on the relationship between training practices and performance of graduates of bachelor of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in Kenya.

Unique Contributions to Theory, Practice and Policy: The results underscore the importance of TVETA accredited universities having appropriate institutional characteristics that can support enhancement of the performance of bachelors of business courses graduates. The study recommends that these institutions put in place institutional characteristics in terms of entry behavior, organizational culture and physical facilities that can enhance performance of graduates from TVETA bachelors of business courses graduates through competitive employability, productivity, and entrepreneurship rates.

Keywords: *Training Practices, Institutional Characteristics, Performance, TVETA Accredited Universities*

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INTRODUCTION

Many of the higher learning institutions and universities including Technical Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) accredited universities are, seeking solutions to adapt and create niches that are relevant to the societies in which they exist. The institutions are making efforts to offer quality education that is relevant and can be evaluated through their graduates outstanding performance, Industry Based Learning (IBL), and training performance of students, (Servano, Cabalza, and Bitera, 2017). The effectiveness of an educational institution program offered can be measured through the competencies of its graduates (Plantilla, 2017). Training and education are seen as a lifelong endeavor that aims to provide an individual with relevant knowledge, skills attitudes, and values for better employment. The social attitudinal and self-regulatory competencies or traits allow graduates to communicate effectively, work well with others, and persist in the face of adversity (Hora, 2016, Armstrong2020). Training is also used to realize institutional goals and is considered as an effective tool to enhance employee performance which translates to achieving organizational objectives, (Afroz, 2018). The TVETA accredited universities aim at inculcating values such as integrity, right attitude among its trainees and also aim at enhancing communication skills by integrating more interactive teaching and learning pedagogical approach which enhance skills such as communication, report writing, and participation in activities that give them more exposure and create linkages and networks. In a study done in Philippines by (Tolentino, 2020), on On-the-job Training (Practicum) and academic performance of the BSBA students of the college of Business Systems Plus colleges foundation showed that trainees were rated very good in the area of competencies in areas such as time management and adhering to rules and regulations. These and many others, are the competencies that TVETA accredited universities aim to impart on their graduates to give them a competitive edge on the job market.

The purpose of education is to equip the citizenry with values, skills and knowledge and also to develop the trainee's capabilities, attitudes, behavior that is relevant to societal needs, (Kimani, Kara and Njagi, 2013). In adopting the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system of education, many countries of the world intended that TVET would contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as per the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation's (UNESCO), 2022-2029 TVET Strategy, (ILO 2023) Report. The Report adds that the TVET system of education is supposed to be inclusive and proactive in tackling many issues including supporting informal employment by embracing innovative approaches which can help extend social protection to informal workers. In 2023, Kenya launched National Skills Development policy whose goal was to promote sustainable socio-economic development of a skilled workforce that is employable, productive, enterprising, innovative, adaptive and competitive, (MoLSP, 2023). The State Department for Labour and Skills Development was mandated under the Executive Order No.2 of 2023, to establish and manage the institutional framework for linking industry, skills development and training and manage the skills and post training policy. In line with this, according to Kenya's (MoE 2018) Report, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education reformation sector introduced a Competence Based Education and Training (CBET) education system. The CBET system of education and presented a framework for the delivery and implementation of CBET education in the Technical, Vocational and Training sectors. The CBET was meant to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application ensuring graduates of TVET institutions are equipped with the skills and knowledge employers demand as the system emphasizes the acquisition of competence (MoE 2018).

Another objective of CBET was to ensure that training is responsive to labour market information and skills anticipation, among others. In the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system of education, skills, knowledge, and attitudes are specified to define and to help achieve competence standards (Obwoye, 2016). These competencies acquired are those needed in specific occupations and by the labour market demands of established industries or businesses in a particular country. One of the TVET education progression guidelines framework is to establish, enact develop and sustain legal and institutional framework which includes association with partners especially through Work Based Learning (WBL), in the context of this study, IBL model which can be effectively implemented and progressed, (UNESCO, 2021). The occupational standards are maintained in line with changes in technology, processes, and practice. While all universities enroll essentially similar types of students, they all have vastly different absorption rates at the market. Different Institutional characteristics are said to play a role in explaining employment absorption rates (Toutkoushian and Smart 2001).

To enable a higher learning institution to perform, it is required to have appropriate institutional characteristics in place. This institutional characteristic includes entry behavior, leadership, infrastructure, and qualified staff. In the current study, institutional characteristics are entry behavior, organisational culture and physical facilities. Entry behavior refers to the information, attitudes, and abilities that a student should already have and which are necessary for success in the learning activity or subject matter, (Amtu O., et. al., 2021). While organizational behavior/culture refers to the shared values, beliefs attitudes, behaviors and practices that characterizes an organization that is likely to move employees to work together towards common goals and achieve greater success, (Nderitu, Chui and Edabu, 2020). The facilities that are important in a training institution include an appropriate physical environment with adequate classrooms and laboratories that are well equipped, an appropriate internet infrastructure, among others. All these are important for the performance of graduates at workplace, (Etalong and Chikeleze 2023).

Performance of Bachelor of Business Courses Graduates

According to Lin (2018) job performance refers to all of the actions taken by employees in order to make contributions to organizational goals, an action which is applied in employment and intrapreneurship. The role of higher education in the progress of a society is indispensable as it contributes to the shaping up of the minds, moulding behaviors and developing of distinctive capabilities in the human being to enable them serve the society better (Iqbal, Baluch and Abdullah 2017). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2022) Report, besides higher education helping in producing advanced skills and generating new knowledge and innovation, it also plays a key role in up-skilling and re-skilling individuals throughout their lives. These efforts help to enhance employability which can be defined as competence made up of a combination of different kinds of skills and other elements such as attitudes and abilities, (OECD, 2022). A survey study administered in the USA on why college graduates don't feel employable, reported that one fifth of the recent graduates interviewed were of the view that their college education did not provide the skills necessary for their first job, and about half of them said that they decided to apply for below entry-level positions because they felt they were not qualified (Greta 2021). In another study done in Malaysia, (Al-Mazry, Al-rifai and Al-Momany 2015) on training and its impact on the performance of employees at Jordanian Universities, confirmed that there is relationship between effective training and employee's job performance.

Higher education of any country is expected to be well placed to serve the needs of an economy that increasingly values advanced skills. Technological advances however, are eliminating jobs that involve routine manual and cognitive tasks, and are creating new jobs that require digital skills. Kenya is motivated by the emerging need to achieve a new economic status through the achievement of the Kenya Vision 2030. Thus, graduates' employability and intrapreneurship behaviour are top on the list as key measures of graduates from universities.

TVETA Accredited Universities in Kenya

Kenya, through a Sessional Paper No 14 (2012) on policy framework for reforming education and training, made several reforms aimed at enhancing access to equality and quality and relevance in education. In line with this, the government proposed the expansion of some technical and vocational colleges, national polytechnics and technical universities. As such, the following six institutions were designated to be established as universities offering TVET programmes alongside Commission for Higher Education (CUE) curriculum, as per the Universities Act 2012. These institutions are: The Technical University of Kenya (TUK), The Technical University of Mombasa (TUM), Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (DKUT), Meru University of Science and Technology (MUST), The Cooperative University of Kenya (CUK) and Murang'a University of Technology, (TVETA, 2023). Kenya's TVETA accredited universities are meant to offer higher education and research in technology, and were created with the objective to be the technological force behind the Kenya Vision 2030 in realization that major technological breakthroughs are propelled by technological universities. These universities use Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) system of education. This system allows admission from Certificate, Diploma, Bachelors in Science and Bachelors in Technology, up to Doctor of Technology level. These graduates are intended to be competent and practical oriented in their various disciplines due to hands on nature of training that they receive. Originally, these institutions were meant to restrict their teaching to technical engineering discipline but have with time developed a wide range of programmes that now also include the arts and humanities.

Statement of the Problem

Several studies have raised concern over the importance of critical engagement of graduates' skills and competencies in higher education institutions. Among the concerns cited are as follows; The International Labour Organization (2018) Report estimates that 86 million youths aged between 18-34 years are unemployed or unable to access decent work. The biggest challenge by the graduates among these youths is lack of appropriate skills required by employers by millions of graduates seeking for employment. According to Ezrati, (2018), 6.5 million jobs in the United States of America (USA), remain unfilled because employers cannot find workers with the necessary skills.

Graduate unemployment in Africa is a major concern among stakeholders. A study by (Preez, Merw and Swart, 2019), in South Africa on employability skills among consumer science graduates showed that essential employability skills such as communication, problem solving, management skills, among others, are lacking among graduates, making them unemployable. An employee's attitude towards work, organization and colleagues is also considered to be a hindrance to their performance. A study by Rahman and Kodikal, (2017) on impact of employee work related attitudes on job performance on health care sector in Bahrain showed that the performance of the healthcare workers is influenced by job related attitudes like satisfaction, leadership, work commitment and job involvement. In another Report, Jayne, Chamberlin, and Benfica, (2018) indicated that Africa's economic transformation depends

on a knowledgeable and skillful workforce equipped for the current and future labour market demands. As such, young people should be equipped with solid foundational skills such as basic cognitive skills, digital skills, and non-cognitive skills which should all be enhanced during training. In technical universities, the training includes Industry Based Learning (IBL), which in most instances is internal and external.

Values, improved capabilities, knowledge and skills of graduates and are considered to be a major source of competitive advantage that enhances intrapreneurship in the global employment market (Al-Omar 2022). As such, lack of strong values from an individual can pose a challenge to the efficiency and effectiveness of an employee. A Report by Dorkenoo, Israel, and Semordey, (2022) on the concept of workplace values and its effect on employee performance and corporate profitability in Africa, revealed that inspiring workplace values that encourage and enable employees to bring their best efforts and best ideas to work every day is one that promotes individual growth and organizational performance and profitability.

In another study by Jacobetty, Mancini, and Maina, (2022), on graduates' employability skills in East Africa showed a mismatch between skills acquired in higher education and those in demand by employers. In Kenya, a survey study by Inter-University Council for East Africa and quoted by the East African Newspaper of June 12, 2014, showed that 51 per cent the graduates in Kenya are believed to be unfit for employment and lack the essential 4C's skills, namely Communication, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration skills and practical expertise in the job they are seeking. The Report blames the situation of poor training at the universities. On university education in Kenya, Odhiambo, (2018) says that there are serious concerns especially about the ability of Kenya's universities to produce the kind of graduates who can drive the country forward.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education in Kenya has undergone reforms which spurred phenomenal growth in university institutions to the current 78 universities. But despite this growth, the universities face many challenges which affect their performance. Among them is the low global university ranking, low enrolment of international students, weak structures of governance and funding, Report of the Presidential Working Party Report 2023, Republic of Kenya (2023). As envisioned in Kenya's Vision 2030, Republic of Kenya, (2007). blueprint, Education and Training is primary means to social mobility, national cohesion and social economic development.

The link between education and the labour market, especially on the need to create entrepreneurial skills and competences and strong public and private sector partnerships, Sessional Paper No.1, (2019) is a challenge to the achievement of Kenya Vision 2030. The partnership included the enhancement of the role of IBL in education and training and its implementation. In 2020, the government established the National Skills Development Policy with the objective of providing a national framework for harmonizing, planning, coordinating, development, management and utilization of skills in Kenya. The policy's objective was overarching National policy guiding covering such as skills development at workplace including apprenticeship, internships, indentured among others. A study by Onyuna (2019) on competency development among hospitality management graduates in Kenya reinforced the importance of IBL by stating that IBL has previously been used to successfully expose trainees to requisite job-related experiences.

An OECD, (2016) Report says that the tertiary education sector needs to reinvent itself to give the industry greater ownership over what the learners learn, when they learn and where they learn to meet tomorrow's demand for knowledge and skills. Despite a raft of reforms on

technical and vocational education that saw some six TVET institutions upgraded to universities to target skills development in priority sectors in line with vision 2030, these universities are more less operating like conventional universities in all aspects as there is no framework to have them operate in the true sense of a technical university (Momanyi, 2021). There is therefore, a need to re-look at the current policy and legal frameworks to ensure that they are in line with standards that define technical universities and where possible provide for restructuring. This restructuring should focus on the development of a CBET system of education and its implementation, the learning environment including the physical facilities available for staff and learners and students' entry behaviour, among others. Hence the need for the current study that set out to explore the intervening effect of institutional characteristics on the relationship between training practices and performance of bachelor of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited Universities in Kenya.

For any higher learning institution to perform, it is required to have appropriate institutional characteristics in place. This institutional characteristic includes entry behaviour, leadership, infrastructure, and qualified staff. A study on Germany higher education, clearly indicates that the partnership between educational institutions and workplaces has proved to be a one practical way to increase university responsiveness for the economy, to bring authentic lessons from the market into the university curriculum, to enhance skills desired by contemporary employers and thus, to enhance employability for students and graduates (Tran, 2016). A report by Wanyama, (2022), on physical facilities on student's participation in science and technology programmes in public universities in Kenya, established that inadequacy of physical facilities stood at 74 per cent and concluded that universities were experiencing acute of facilities to the extent that they had not reached the minimum acceptable level.

Research Objective

The objective of the study was to explore the intervening effect of institutional characteristics on the relationship between training practices and performance of bachelor of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

To achieve the objective of this study, the following hypothesis was formulated for testing: **Ho:** Institutional characteristics have no intervening effect in the relationship between training practices and the performance of bachelor of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited u universities in Kenya.

Theoretical Review

Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory was developed in the 1960s by Theodore Schultz and Jacob Mincer. Later, they were joined by Becker whose work was vital in providing greater empirical support to Human Capital Theory. The theory is a framework for understanding several aspects of lifetime human behavior, providing an effective and powerful example of the ability of economies to deal with social issues, (Aggrawa and Bhargava 2009). The theory considers not only the physical aspects of the human being but also one's abilities, proficiency, skills, knowledge, mental capabilities, potentialities, attitude and values as well. Training is clearly required if a person is to operate, repair, manage, or invest complex machines (Chrystal and Lipsey 2011).

The impact of investment in human capital was evidenced in a study done on the performance of Janata Bank in Bangladesh that examined the aspects of investment in human capital, (Rahman and Mahmud, 2020). The results revealed that investment in training knowledge level and skills of the employee were positively connected to bank performance at less than 1% and a 5% level of significance. This theory well captures the training practices independent variable in this study which ought to enhance performance and intrapreneurship of bachelor of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in Kenya. Part of the investment in human capital should include investment in infrastructure, staff and organizational culture.

Theory of Behavior

Social Learning Theory was proposed by Bandura, (1977) who emphasizes the importance of observing, modelling, and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Social learning theory considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning and behavior, McLeod, (2016). In social learning theory, Bandura (1977) agrees with the behaviorist learning theory that behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning and that the mediating processes occur between stimuli and responses. Bandura and another behaviorist theorist, Skinner, agreed that personality develops through learning. But Bandura disagreed with Skinner's strict behaviorist approach to personality development because he felt that thinking and reasoning are important components of learning. Bandura (1977) believes that humans are active information processors and think about the relationship between their behavior and its consequences. The social learning theory is relevant in this study, because its best suited to show the influence of institutional characteristics that form the environment as a cognitive factor that influence learning through observation.

Training Practices, Institutional Characteristics and Performance of Bachelors of Business Courses Graduates

Institutional characteristics are important in enhancing the performance of graduates. Research and experience indicate that institutional characteristics such as entry behavior, organizational culture, and physical facilities play a role in performance of learners. Others include curriculum, staff caliber and approach to training practices and their relationship with the trainers, (CUE 2023). The term entry behavior refers to the information, attitudes, and abilities that a student should already have and which are necessary for success in the learning activity or subject matter. While organizational behavior refers to the shared values, beliefs attitudes, behaviors and practices that characterizes an organization. This sharing, is likely to move employees to work together towards common goals and achieve greater success (Nderitu, Chui and Edabu, 2020). Studies have shown that lack of cohesion or conflicting values within an organization can lead to decreased morale and productivity. Physical facilities are an important component of institutional characteristics necessary in a training institution. But a study by Wanyama, (2022), established that inadequacy of physical facilities in Kenya's universities stood at 74%. The study further indicated that universities were experiencing acute shortage of facilities to the extent that they had not reached the minimum acceptable level. The facilities important in a training institution include appropriate physical environment with adequate classrooms and laboratories that are well equipped, an appropriate internet infrastructure, among others. Employee performance is the level of productivity, efficiency and effectiveness with which an employee performs their job responsibilities and meets the expectations set by organization, (Etalong and Chikeleze, 2023).

The findings of Okanga, Ogur, and Arud's, (2017) study on the influence of institutional factors on the performance of Bachelor of Science Nursing students in the Nursing Council of Kenya Licensure Examinations appear to support the role of institutional characteristics. According to the study, one of the important aspects that is believed to be influencing performance is the admission requirements. Institutional characteristics are important in enhancing the performance of graduates in a learning environment. In the current study, institutional characteristics include entry behavior, organizational culture and facilities available for students and for teaching different courses and caliber of staff. A conducive learning environment is one that is learning-centered that allows an institution to develop every learners' potential talents. Another study done in Kenya by Nderitu, Chui and Edabu, (2020) on institutional characteristics and competitiveness of private universities in Nairobi Kenya, established that institutional characteristics such as a planning strategy influence competitiveness of private universities. The TVETA accredited universities should always seek more effective ways to enhance students' achievement through careful design and evaluation of programs and having appropriate environment (Higher Learning Commission, 2015; Roy and Shrivastara, 2020).

In yet another study, Muhittin, (2014) on effect of cognitive entry behaviors and affective entry characteristics on learning level, the study revealed that in a university level course the variable of cognitive entry behaviors had a significant and medium level effect on learning level in a university level course. The two variables collectively accounted for 6% of the variables of learning level. Another study De La Cruz, (2020) in Philippines on clan culture among school organizations revealed that clan culture affects school performance as it can influence work behavior and attitudes of school personnel increasing their loyalty and commitment optimizing their performance to achieve their goals as they collaborate with each other, a factor which in this study should enhance team work skills at work.

Amtu, Aralaha, Pattiruhu and Makulua (2021) say that leadership and organizational culture are important factors as they help to determine quality of higher education. Their study in Indonesia on creating higher education quality through leadership, organizational culture and organizational commitment, they found out that leadership and organizational culture require organizational commitment to building communication and motivation through expectations and academic values that develop in a healthy, creative, innovative and dynamic manner because they encourage collaboration, synergy and of all elements of higher education to achieve the quality standards set. The studies agree with the Higher Learning Commission, (2015), on the role of institutional characteristics.

Many studies on institutional characteristics have tended to focus on one or two characteristics only. For example, Nguyen, Tue and Kien (2021) study on the effects of institutional characteristics on research productivity at Vietnam university of science and technology focused on infrastructure of building only and did not look at the impact of other institutional characteristics such as entry behavior, leadership and staff caliber, neither did the study look at the relationship between training practices, Government policy and performance of Bachelors of Business courses graduates.

While making his case on university curriculum, Banyankimbona (2021) submits that there is need for universities to adopt Competency-Based Curriculum and to enhance the relationship between education institutional characteristics and the society in which it exists. The study does not consider the effect of institutional characteristics and performance of graduates at workplace, while Nguyen, Tue and Kien (2021) says that for any higher learning institution to

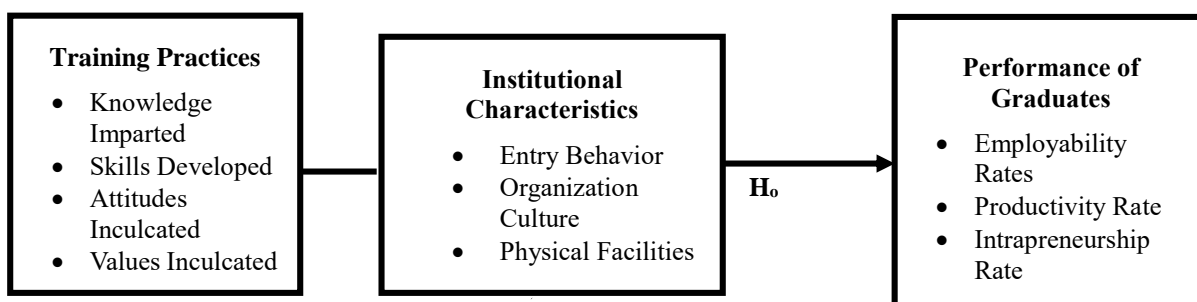
perform, it is required to have appropriate institutional characteristics in place. The study was conducted in Vietnam university of Science and Technology and it focused on infrastructure of buildings only. It did not focus on the impact of infrastructure such as technology, entry behavior, organisational culture which this study put emphasis on.

Conceptual Framework

The hypothesized relationship of the study is depicted on the conceptual framework

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



Source: Researchers (2023)

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design of all TVETA accredited universities in Kenya. The descriptive research design was considered appropriate given that it allowed the researchers to describe the training practices adopted by the TVETA accredited universities and make specific predictions on how much change was caused by predictor variables and whether the effect was significant. The study was guided by positivist philosophical orientation. The quality of research instruments and the accuracy of data collection procedures determine the outcome of a study (Kothari and Gaurav, 2014). The instrument reliability was achieved through measuring construct validity using Cronbach Alpha estimate. The Cronbach Alpha values were training practices 0.973, institutional characteristics 0.832, and performance of graduates 0.935. Instrument validity was ensured by a review of the instrument by experts in the field and pilot testing of the instrument.

The unit of analysis of the study were bachelor of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in Kenya. Through snowballing of IBL reports from each of the TVETA accredited universities. Through the graduates, their employers or managers, who were the unit of observation of the graduates' performance was obtained. Purposive and systematic snowballing sampling were used to draw a sample for the study. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire and a Google form. The data was analyzed using multi-linear regression model. The statistical package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27 was utilized to analyze the data.

To test the hypothesized relationship, mean scores were computed for likert type questions. The value of coefficient of determination R^2 shows the degree or amount of variation in the dependent variable attributed to the predictor variable. The Beta values show the amount of change in the dependent variable attributable to the amount of change in the predictor variable, and the F ratio measures the model fit, or simply it is a measure of how well the equation line developed fits with the observed data. The statistical significance of the hypothesized relationship was interpreted based on R^2 , F , t , β and p values. The stepwise

multiple regression (Baron and Kenny Method) was used to test the relationship. **Step 1: $PG = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TP + \epsilon$, Step 2: $IC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TP + \epsilon$, Step 3: $PG = \beta_0 + \beta_2 IC + \epsilon$, and Step 4: $PG = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TP + \beta_2 IC + \epsilon$.** Where; $\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2$ = coefficient for independent variables, **PG** is Performance of Graduates, **IC** is Institutional Characteristics, **TP** is Training Practices, and ϵ = Error term.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to explore the intervening effect of institutional characteristics on the relationship between training practices and the performance of bachelor of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in Kenya. To achieve this objective, the study respondents were requested to respond to questions that were formulated as statements on training practices, institutional characteristics, and performance of bachelor of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in Kenya. Based on this objective the hypothesis of the study was derived **H₀**: Institutional characteristics have no intervening effect in the relationship between training practices and the performance of bachelor of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in Kenya.

Stepwise multiple regression analysis using the Baron and Kenny method was adopted to test the hypothesis and it was conducted using 4 linear regression analyses as: 1: Training Practices as independent variable and Performance of Graduates as dependent variable. 2: Institutional Characteristics as dependent variable and Training Practices as independent variable. 3: Performance of Graduates as dependent variable and Institutional Characteristics as independent variable. 4: Performance of Graduates as dependent and both Training Practices and Institutional Characteristics as independent variables. The results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis, based on the objective and hypothesis are presented on Tables 1(a) and 1(b).

Table 1(a): Regression Results for Intervening Effect of Institutional Characteristics in the Relationship between Training Practices and Performance of Bachelor of Business Courses Graduates from TVETA Accredited Universities in Kenya

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.908 ^a	.824	.822	3.332	.824	387.952	1	83	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Training Practices									
ANOVA ^a									
Model	Sum of Squares		Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
1	Regression	4308.019	1	4308.019	387.952	.000 ^b			
	Residual	921.675	83	11.105					
	Total	5229.694	84						
a. Dependent Variable: Institutional Characteristics									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Training Practices									
Coefficients ^a									
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.			
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	1.497	2.156		.694	.490			
	Training Practices	.298	.015	.908	19.696	.000			
a. Dependent Variable: Institutional Characteristics									
Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.865 ^a	.749	.746	5.396	.749	247.149	1	83	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Characteristics									
ANOVA ^a									
Model	Sum of Squares		Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
1	Regression	7196.443	1	7196.443	247.149	.000 ^b			
	Residual	2416.781	83	29.118					
	Total	9613.224	84						
a. Dependent Variable: Graduate Performance									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Characteristics									
Coefficients ^a									
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.			
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	13.848	3.288		4.211	.000			
	Institutional Characteristics	1.173	.075	.865	15.721	.000			
a. Dependent Variable: Graduate Performance									

Table 1 (b): Regression Results for Intervening Effect of Institutional Characteristics in the Relationship between Training Practices and Performance of Bachelor of Business Courses Graduates from TVETA Accredited Universities in Kenya

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.898 ^a	.806	.801	4.770	.806	170.216	2	82	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Characteristics, Training Practices									
ANOVA ^a									
Model	Sum of Squares		Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
1	Regression	7747.159	2	3873.579	170.216	.000 ^b			
	Residual	1866.065	82	22.757					
	Total	9613.224	84						
a. Dependent Variable: Graduate Performance									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Characteristics, Training Practices									
Coefficients ^a									
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.			
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	8.614	3.096		2.783	.007			
	Training Practices	.254	.052	.570	4.919	.000			
	Institutional Characteristics	.471	.157	.348	3.001	.004			
a. Dependent Variable: Graduate Performance									

From Tables 1(a) and 1(b) going through the results of the 4-step multiple regression analysis as per the Baron and Kenny method: **Step 1:** The results show that Training Practices has a significant positive influence on Graduate Performance ($\beta = 0.395$, $p < 0.000$). **Step 2:** The results show that Training Practices has a significant positive influence on Institutional Characteristics ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.000$). **Step 3:** The results show that Institutional Characteristics has a significant positive influence on Graduate Performance ($\beta = 1.173$, $p < 0.000$). **Step 4:** When both Training Practices and Institutional Characteristics are included in the model, the effect of Training Practices on Graduate Performance is reduced ($\beta = 0.254$, $p < 0.000$) compared to Step 1, while Institutional Characteristics also has a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.471$, $p < 0.05$). The results support the hypothesis that Institutional Characteristics has an intervening effect on the relationship between Training Practices and Graduate Performance. Specifically, the significant relationships found in Steps 1-3 provide the necessary conditions for an intervening effect. In Step 4, the reduced effect of Training Practices on Graduate Performance when Institutional Characteristics are controlled for suggests a partial intervening effect. This means that the influence of Training Practices on Graduate Performance is partly explained by the influence of Training Practices on Institutional Characteristics, which in turn affects Graduate Performance.

The findings indicate that Institutional Characteristics partially intervene in the relationship between Training Practices and Graduate Performance. This provides support to reject the null hypothesis H_0 : that "Institutional Characteristics has no intervening effect in the relationship between Training Practices and performance of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in Kenya". On the basis of the results it was concluded that institutional characteristics have a partial influence on the relationship between training practices and

performance of bachelor of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in Kenya.

The Human Capital Theory provides a framework for understanding several aspects of lifetime human behavior, providing an effective and powerful example of the ability of economics to deal with social issues, (Aggrawa and Bhargava 2009). The theory considers not only the physical aspects of human beings but also one's abilities, proficiency, skills, knowledge, mental capabilities, potentialities, attitude and values as well. Universities and policy makers have to deliberately formulate and implement training practices that enhance knowledge imparted, skills developed, attitudes and values inculcated among learners. This should be reinforced with institutional characteristics that support Industry Based Learning (IBL), and competency-based education and training. These efforts are expected to spur the performance of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in terms of employability rates, productivity rates, and intrapreneurship rates.

The finding of the study underscores the critical role of training practices and institutional characteristics in predicting graduate performance, emphasizing the importance of investing in and enhancing these factors to improve overall outcomes. The findings suggest a potential intervening effect of institutional characteristics on the relationship between training practices and graduate performance and affirms the finding of a study done in Malaysia on the impact of institutional training characteristics on international students' choice of private higher education institution by Migin, et, al, (2015), that institutional characteristics are important in measuring foreign students' choice of Malaysian private institutions where learners were said to prefer institutions that allow development of everyone's potential talents by paying attention on learning of students, faculty, staff and for the institution itself. In the current study, the institutional characteristics that contribute a conducive learning environment that is deemed to influence the performance of graduates included entry behaviour, organisational culture and institutional facilities. The results also underscore the results of a study done in Indonesia by Hadiyanto and Sulistiyo, (2020) on Graduates 21st Ccentury skills pperformance that revealed that universities should provide a teaching and learning environment that enhances students' skills and creativity to produce competent graduates that will be effective at work place, among other findings, (Kovalevsky, 2020; ILO, 2014). This study too, underscores findings of a report on Germany higher education, which clearly indicated that the partnership between educational institutions and workplaces has proved to be a one practical way to increase university responsiveness for the economy, to bring authentic lessons from the market into the university curriculum, to enhance skills desired by contemporary employers and thus, to enhance employability for students and graduates (Tran, 2016).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

In view of the findings, the study concluded that there is empirical evidence that institutional characteristics intervene in the relationship between training practices and performance of business courses graduates from TVETA accredited universities in Kenya.

Recommendation

This study identified knowledge Imparted, Values inculcated and Industry Based Learning as the key significant dimensions that influence the performance of graduates and also expose the trainees to more leadership course units, cooperation and reasoning abilities and having a more conducive learning environment. The study recommends that TVETA accredited universities

have to put in place institutional characteristics that support and enhance the employability of their graduates in terms of employability rates, productivity rate, and intrapreneurship rate.

The current study corroborates the findings and conclusion of the study that there is a need for institutions of higher learning to put in place institutional characteristics such as entry behavior, organizational culture and physical facilities and a general enabling environment for learning.

These findings suggest a potential mediating effect of institutional characteristics on the relationship between training practices and graduate performance. Further mediation analysis may be warranted to explore this relationship in more detail.

Study Limitations and Suggestions for Further Study

The study adopted a self-administered questionnaire that was a self-reported data collection tool which relied on the integrity of the respondents. This is a subjective data collection tool. The researchers suggest that future studies consider other types of instruments for data collection to provide different perspectives.

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