Chapter 3
TVET in Kenya

ABSTRACT

This chapter begins by reviewing the socio-economic indicators and then the education system in Kenya starting from the 7-4-2-3 to 8-4-4 and at present is the 2-6-3-3-3. The chapter also articulated the historical development of TVET in Kenya with special reference to sessional paper 1 of 2005 that divided education into basic education, TVET education, and university education. The chapter has also provided justification for conducting research in the TVET sector of education in Kenya. Most important is a holistic approach towards addressing the challenge of poor learning outcomes by tackling the problem from its input to output in vocational colleges. In this regard, theories identified in the previous chapter are advocated in the present chapter to address this mess.

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF KENYA

The Republic of Kenya is a country in Eastern Africa covering an area of 582,646 sq. km with a population of approximately 50.95 million people. More than 70 per cent of the population are below the age of 30. The country lies on the equator and is bordered by Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan with the Indian Ocean running along the southeast border (see Figure 1). Kenya is a diverse nation of 42 distinct ethnic groups practicing multiparty democracy. Official languages are Swahili and English and the currency is Kenyan Shilling. Kenya has the largest and most diverse economy in East Africa with an average annual growth rate of over 5% for nearly a

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decade. The service sector is the largest contributor to Kenya’s annual GDP accounting for roughly 62.3% followed by Agriculture at 21%. However, the agricultural sector engages more than 75% of the working population. Kenya ranks highest in the region in terms of Human Development Index. Its entrepreneurship and human capital give it huge potential for further growth, job creation and poverty reduction. However, rapid population growth (2.5%), unemployment (7.4%) and poverty (36.1%) especially in the arid, semi-arid and coastal areas still pose a major threat for the country (KNBS, 2018).

The sessional paper number 1 of 2005 on education and training classified education and training in Kenya into three distinct levels: Basic Education, TVET Education and University Education (see Figure 2). Formal schooling begins at the age of six with compulsory and free basic primary education running through to the age of 14. At the end of the primary cycle, students take the national Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination supervised by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) under the Ministry of Education. The examination is used primarily to rank and stream students into secondary schools. Secondary schooling is also free but not compulsory. At the end of the secondary cycle, students take the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination administered by

Figure 1. Map of Kenya with regional boundaries
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