

**AN ANALYSIS OF PROVISION OF PREVOCATIONAL SUBJECTS
AND STUDENTS' VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS IN SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN THIKA DISTRICT**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT, POLICY AND CURRICULUM
STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF
EDUCATION, KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

SEPTEMBER 2012

DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree programme in any other University.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to almighty God in whom we live, move, and have our being.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am greatly indebted to several individuals who contributed to the success of this project in one way or another. First, special thanks to my supervisors Dr. L. I Libese, Prof. J. Malusu and Prof. J. G. Okech who provided constructive criticism to my work.

Secondly, many thanks to all the principals, Head of departments and students who participated in this study by providing useful data. The list is long to permit individuals mention; nevertheless I am grateful to all who supported me in one way or another. May God bless you all.

Finally, I would like to appreciate my parents Mr. Josephat Kanguru and Mrs. Mary Muthoni, my dear wife Eunice and our children Ephraim and Grace who provided both moral and spiritual support.

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which prevocational curriculum provided to public secondary schools students are focused to meet students' vocational aspirations in Thika District. The study was necessitated by the fact that access to secondary school is on the increase while the number of those who score grade high enough for higher education remain relatively very low in the District. The study adopted a descriptive survey design to enable the researcher obtain relevant data from several public secondary schools in Thika District. The target population was all principals, heads of departments of prevocational subjects, career masters/mistress and all forms three students who take prevocational subjects in 69 Secondary Schools in Thika District. The researcher used both purposive and random sampling method to select public schools- National, Provincial and District schools. The sample size was 14 out of 69 schools in the whole region. This was equivalent to 20% of the secondary schools in the District. Stratified sampling technique was employed to select one National, three Provincial and ten district schools. Purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that four boys only and four girls only schools were among the fourteen secondary schools. Purposive sampling was used to select all principals, head of departments and career masters/mistress in the sampled schools, while simple random sampling was employed to select six students from each of the prevocational subjects in respective schools. The main instruments for data collection were questionnaires with both closed and open ended items administered to 20% of the principals (N=14), career teachers (N=14), head of department (N=14) and 248 students. Data were analysed and presented in form of Descriptive statistics including tables, frequencies, percentage and pie charts. The main finding of the study is that most students highly value the skills they are receiving from the prevocational subjects that have been provided to them even though prevocational subject do not necessarily or directly relate to their vocational aspirations. The researcher therefore, recommended among other things, more initiative from both policy makers and implementers to align prevocational curriculum to students aspirations and to National aspirations enshrined in vision 2030.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CDF	-	Constituent Development Fund
DFID	-	Department for International Development
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
H.O.D	-	Head of Department
K.C.S.E	-	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
K.I.E	-	Kenya Institute of Education
KNEC	-	Kenya National Examination Council
M.O.E	-	Ministry of Education
MOEST	-	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
N.C.E.O.P	-	National Committee on Educational Objectives
TVE	-	Technical and Vocational Education

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Globally, prevocational curriculum is introduced into a national curriculum because of a number of reasons. These include: the personal development goal of educating the “whole person”; the socio-political goal of providing equal opportunity and catering for a wide range of talents; and the economic goal of preparing students for the world of work with more economically relevant education. According to Lauglo (2005) the policy rationale for vocationalisation in Kenya, was that, vocational courses could enhance a smooth transition of secondary school graduates into the world of work and also provide to them opportunities for further training at relevant post-secondary training institution .

Bogonko (1992) observes that historically, technical / vocational education had existed in Kenya before the coming of the western education in form of African indigenous education which was largely practical.

The coming of Western education system not only led to the abolition of African indigenous education system but also affected African perception of technical and vocational education as a whole. Anderson (1979) and Smith (1973) note that African Perception was affected to the extent that attempt to introduce Agriculture in 1927 in Alliance High School failed as the African students termed vocational subjects as inferior to academic subjects since they were not being offered to European and Asian children; Education for the Europeans and Asian was academic. African curriculum, according to Bogonko (1992) was technically and vocationally oriented because it provided them with skills that aimed at fitting them as labourers on the European farms.

Lauglo (2005) asserts that at the time of independence, black Africans, Kenyans included rushed to throw off the “shackle” of vocational education in favour of the academic education that they had previously been denied. Therefore, the widespread expansion of education that followed independence movement did not favour vocational and technical education.

Also Eshwani (1993) notes that immediately after independence emphasis at all levels of schools was on academic subjects rather than technical or practical skills. Education was seen as a tool to equip the youths with a certificate which would lead them to social and economic advancement. The aim was therefore, to pass national examinations and thus secure in well paying job.

From 1970 onwards the number of school leavers started to swell, while job opportunities started to shrink. The rate of unemployment grew as the school leavers rushed town and urban areas to look for white collar jobs for which the education system appear to have prepared them for.

According to Lauglo (2005) to address the issue of employability the vocationalised curriculum was introduced along with the implementation of a new 8-4-4 national education system. The vocationalised curriculum was introduced in 1985 in secondary schools in Kenya and was geared towards imparting learners with practical skills and right attitudes for self-employment, salaried employment or further training (Republic of Kenya, 1981).

Makori (2000) observes that when this education is offered learners will have opportunity to acquire positive attitudes towards manipulative tasks while they socialize with one another thus providing them with a rare opportunity of developing domain of knowledge,

namely, cognitive, psychomotor, affective and interactive skills. However the vocationalized curriculum, in spite of its potential benefits has faced many challenges these include; rushed implementation, lack of funds, facilities, equipment and trained personnel, and cultural mindset. Makori (2000) asserts that more than any other factor, it is likely that perceptions of vocational education in colonial era proved fatal to the vocationalisation of secondary education while Lauglo asserts that it did not get acceptance from the parents because of the heavy burden it placed on them due to the policy of cost sharing.

Therefore, the vocationalised curriculum was heavily criticized and in 2003 it was rationalized. Currently a student is expected to take at least one prevocational subject at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations (Republic of Kenya, 2009). However, the M.O.E through the K.IE recommends eleven prevocational subjects to be offered in Kenyan secondary schools including those of Thika District. The prevocational subjects recommended include Home science, Art and Design, Agriculture, Woodwork, Metalwork, Building and Construction, Power mechanics. Aviation Technology, Computer, Electricity. The number of prevocation subjects recommended for provision is big enough to cater for varied vocational aspirations of secondary school students in any District in Kenya, Thika District included. However, the number and the type of prevocational subject provided to students is left at the discretion of the school management. The school management have limited resources or may be strongly inclined to provision of academics. On the other hand, majority of the secondary school students from Thika District do not manage to get a grade high enough to be admitted in University. Therefore, great attention is needed on how well the prevocational subjects meet the vocational aspirations of secondary school students in Thika District. In ideal situation, a student should take a prevocational subject based on ability, aptitude and interest so that the time and effort

invested by all stakeholder may bear maximum benefit, leading to individual development and self fulfillment as envisioned in the National Goals of Education in our country.

Otherwise, as Kenya focus on becoming a newly industrializing, middle income country providing quality life for all its citizens by year 2030, in accordance to vision 2030, and aiming at emphasizing in Science and technology courses, Lang (1992) observes that, it should be clear that technology cannot be separated from technical and vocational knowledge because technology must use the vocational technical skills such cutting and shaping metal.

Therefore, as Lang asserts, re-conceptualizing vocationalisation may be needed in secondary school education. The re-conceptualized prevocational curriculum should be geared towards meeting the learners' vocational aspirations. This study will explore the current state of prevocational curriculum in meeting the vocational aspirations of Secondary school students of Thika District.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The background to the problem reviews that a wide range of prevocational subjects have been recommended by the M.O.E to be provided by secondary schools in Kenya, Thika District included. This implies that the government recognizes the important role prevocational subjects play in the life's of the learners and the Kenyan society. At the same time it is a reflection that the government appreciate that the prevocational needs of the learners are diverse. As such, a lot of resources, both human and material have been invested in schools. Effective use of these resources depends on the level of acceptance of the prevocational subjects provided in school. To be accepted the prevocational subjects provided in secondary schools in Thika District should be seen to meet the immediate and long term needs of the learner. The long term needs are in the form of students' vocational

aspirations. However no research has been done on analyses of the prevocational subjects provided and the students' vocational aspirations in secondary schools in Thika District despite the continued investment in these subjects.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the provision of prevocational subjects and students, vocational aspirations in Secondary Schools in Thika District.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study focused on the following objectives;

1. To determine the vocational aspirations of students in secondary schools in Thika District.
2. To find out the prevocational subjects provided by different secondary schools in Thika District.
3. To establish the prevocational subjects preferred by the students in secondary schools in Thika District.
4. To find out the extent to which prevocational subjects provided in secondary schools in Thika District reflect the students' aspirations.

1.5 Research Questions

This research study sought answers to the following research:-

1. What are the students' vocational aspirations in secondary schools in Thika District?
2. What prevocational subjects are provided by different secondary schools in Thika District?
3. Which prevocational subjects are preferred by students in secondary schools in Thika District?
4. To what extent do prevocational subjects provided match the vocational aspirations of secondary school students in Thika District?

1.6 Significance

The findings of this study are expected to contribute towards the provision of a more relevant prevocational curriculum. The educational policy makers will use the findings to formulate policies on provision of prevocational subjects. The curriculum developers will review the prevocational subjects to provide skills that meet current vocational aspirations of most students. The school managers will receive impetus to give more attention to students' vocational aspirations. The findings will be expected to trigger further research on provision of prevocational subjects given that our country focus on being industrialized by 2030.

1.7 Assumptions

The study was based on the following assumptions: -

1. All students have vocational aspirations and that expressed aspirations were the same as their manifested aspirations in terms of class work, performance.
2. Schools enjoy autonomy in as far as to what prevocational curriculum they wish to provide to learners.
3. Those respondents are honest in their responses.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

The study on prevocational subjects provided to students in secondary schools in Thika district faced several limitations; the first one was limited time and financial constraints which hindered a wide coverage of the area. Secondly, literature on local research on prevocational curriculum in the area is scanty. Thirdly, data on students taking the various prevocational subjects is inadequate. Fourth, the findings cannot be generalized to other Districts.

1.9 Delimitations

This study focused on only one peri-urban district of Kenya; Thika District. The study concentrated itself on public schools only because they receive both financial and human resources support from the government and equity of treatment is expected. As such no comparison was made with private schools. The study confined itself to Head of Departments of prevocational, subjects, career masters and students who take prevocational subjects. The school administration was also involved to provide other relevant information on status of prevocational curriculum in school.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

This present study focused to meet the vocational aspirations of students was guided by Tyler (1949) curriculum theory. This theory is referred to in one way or another by educationist in matters curriculum. The theory is based on four fundamental questions: -

1. What educational purpose should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purpose?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained

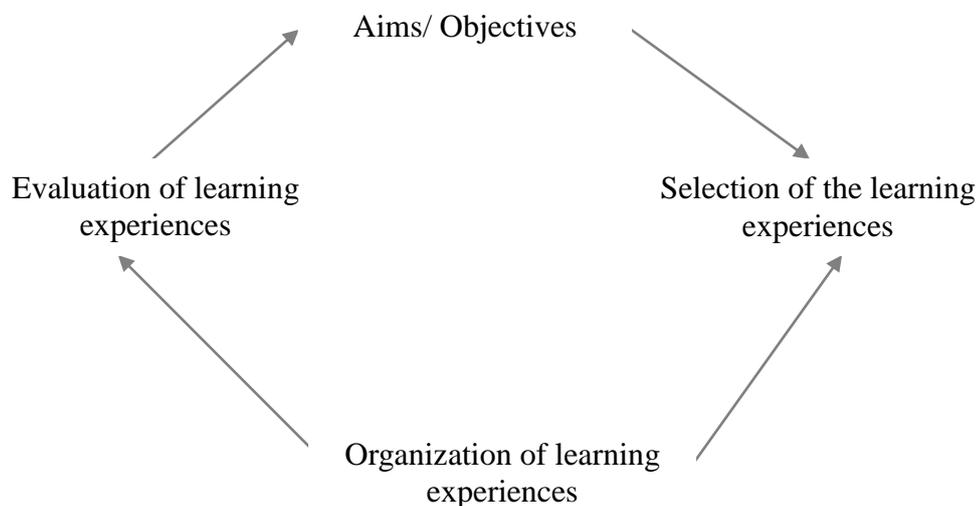


Figure 1.1 *Tyler's Curriculum Conceptual Model*

According to Taba. (1962) the concerns of this theory translate into a nicely ordered procedure.

Step one: Diagnosis of need.

Step two: Formulation of objectives.

Step three: Selection of content.

Step four: Organization of content.

Step five: Selection of learning experiences.

Step six: Organization of learning experiences.

Step seven: Determination of what to evaluate and the ways and means of doing it

Diagnosis of educational needs should focus on both the learner and the society for which education serves. The emphasis of this study is the learner. A learner has needs which are immediate and others which are long term. The long term needs include the educational and vocational aspirations. Prevocational curriculum focus on vocational aspirations of students. Their aspirations should be properly identified in order to adequately plan and provide for them. At form three students have received a lot of learning experiences from other educational levels. They have also encountered a lot of learning experiences outside the school. Therefore, planning for their learning needs as far as prevocational curriculum is concerned should take into account all these facts that have shape their aspirations. At the same time, Ginzerberg, Ginsburg, Axelrads and Herma (1984) theory postulate that people make their career decisions which balance their interests and values with the opportunities and talents available as well as the cost of pursuing the opportunity.

1.11 Conceptual Framework

The study was concerned with how well prevocational curriculum is meeting vocational aspirations of students. Therefore, the study assumes the conceptual Framework outlined in the figure 1.1

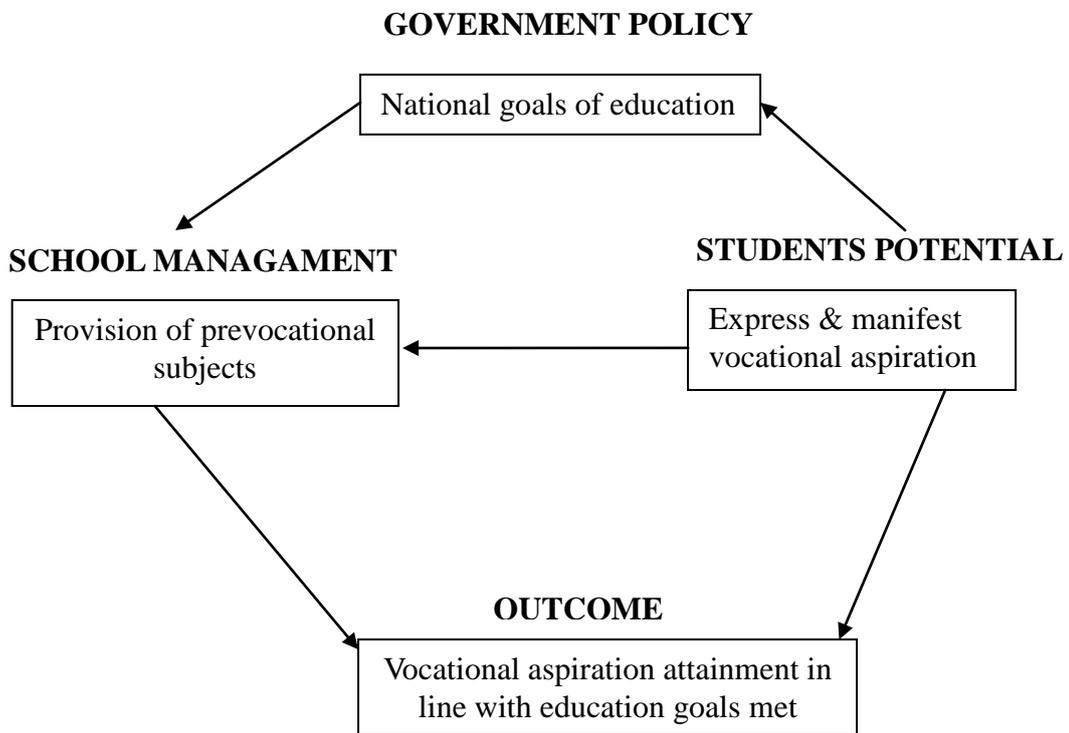


Figure 1.2 *conceptual Framework on the analysis of provision of prevocational subjects and students' vocational aspirations* (Researcher's own model)

Figure 1.1 shows the interaction between the government policy, school management and the learner in attainment of vocational aspirations of the learner. The government of Kenya has formulated policy on provision of prevocational subjects republic of Kenya (2002) education should help every child to develop their potential interests and abilities.

The government through K.I.E has given a guide line on prevocational subjects that should be provided in any school in Kenya.

The school management execute the government policies on particular prevocational subjects. However, the particular prevocational subjects to be provided in school rest at the

discretion of the school managements. The learners are at the centre of the learning process. They are in constant interest with school managements. The students express and manifest their needs and vocational aspirations to the school managements and government agencies. These are done in term of the choices they makes and their performance in school. The outcomes of interaction between the prevocational subjects provided and the vocational aspirations' of the students is the vocational inspirational attainment.

1.12 Definitions of Central Terms

Aspirations - Are goals, dreams, wishes or plans of the qualifications to gain, and career to get. Aspirations could be educational or vocational.

Career Aspirations - They are the dream, goals or plans about one would what to become in terms of vocational or provision.

Prevocational curriculum - work oriented practical, applied and technical subjects taught in Secondary school such as Agriculture, Business Studies, Home Science and Electricity

Vocation - It is a career or occupation one is committed to. It is used as equivalent to career or occupation.

Vocationalization - It is the provision of prevocational subjects to enable learners gain practical skills for self-reliance, employment and for further training.

Self-efficacy - refers to individual's belief in his or her own ability

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

According to Orodho (2009) literature review involves reading and evaluating reports of research as well as other similar reports (casual observation, conferences, seminar work etc) and the opinions that are related to the planned research project. Literature review helps in comparison of what one want to do with the previously done research. It is also important for the identification of the gaps that exist, which forms the entry point of the research.

This chapter analyses students' aspirations, how prevocational subjects is provided and the challenge facing effective provision of prevocational curriculum in secondary school in Thika District.

2.2 Vocational Interests/Aspirations

Most studies carried out on vocational aspirations are focused on factors influencing vocational aspirations such as gender, race, social economic background of the students and expectation of significant people. Gender is clearly one of the most powerful or all influences on vocational behavior. In the past, fewer occupation choices were available to women due to factors e.g. sexism, discrimination and limited education. Bonnet (1994); in his study found that females had lower self-efficacy than males for male dominated occupations while male had lower self-efficacy for traditionally female occupations. (Wiliamson 1996), High school male students demonstrated higher self-efficacy for male dominated professions than their female counterparts.

Pertaining to interest. Several studies have confirmed that there are gender differences on the data/things and people/ideas dimensions. (Lippa 1998, Toker & Some 1998) found that

females are inclined to fall on the people side of the people/idea dimension. Thus gender is one of the factors that influence vocational aspirations of the learners. Other factors include social economic status of students, racial/ethnicity and family structure.

Hansen and Walter (1989) found that highest social economic status students much often aspire to professional and managerial vocations than their lower social economic status peers. Student from economically disadvantaged background are more likely to enroll in vocation courses because economically well off parents have more ambitious career designs for their children. Many of the teacher interviewed indicated that there are many students who are genuinely interested in vocational subjects but who end up dropping them because of pressure from parents. Elite parents are especially hostile to their children enrolling for these subjects with the exception of computer studies, which they associate with failure to succeed.

Hansen D. and Walter (1989) in their study found that 20% of children from families with four children or more children expect to complete only high school education compared to 10% of students from one or two children. Domenico (2007) parent's education level has been positively related to aspirations of youth. Students whose mothers had completed a two - years or four-year post secondary degree had higher perception of work and career related issues.

Mother's occupation was credited with impacting children's aspiration because children of attended work with their mothers and were more likely to know what their mothers did for a living.

Aspirations are influenced considerably by communicated expectations of the significant people who interact with the individual. If these expectations are high and consistent

over time, then there would appear to be a greater likelihood the individuals aspirations will be similarly high Conversely, low expectations often results in low aspirations. Likewise African Americans were found to possess lower career aspiration than their European America counterpart.

Other studies have compared expectations of teachers or parents and students vocational aspirations. However, this study sought to establish the vocational aspirations of secondary school students in Thika District and find out how well they are met by the prevocational subjects provided.

2.2.1 Enrolment in Prevocational Subjects in Secondary Schools

According to Tang, M. and Pain, W, one of the tasks of high school students is to explore and plan for their post secondary career options.

Gottfredson (2005), during adolescence, students have achieved an adult-level understanding of the sex type and prestige level of common occupations. Students therefore eliminating choices that are perceived to be of the opposite sex and those perceived as low social prestige status.

According to Mwiria (2002), five factors determine which students enroll for which vocational courses and for which ones:

- 1) First most students' choice is limited by what is taught in the schools which they attend; within the schools, teachers develop sets of criteria for allocating students to the available courses.
- 2) Second in most schools vocational subjects are more common among average or below average students and more unpopular with the top students.
- 3) A third factor is the positive perception regarding availability of employment

opportunities as with business and computer studies.

- 4) A fourth factor is that of the home backgrounds of the students and in particular the influence exerted by their parents. Some parents are particularly against their children enrolling in Home Science partly due to traditional practices.

Finally, there are some students who are attracted to vocational courses due to genuine interest in them and the economic benefits they see as likely to result in skills imparted through these courses. Such students are less likely to be influenced negatively against enrolling in their chosen vocational subjects.

This implies that it is possible that a student enrolls in a subject for which he does not genuinely aspire to take a career in. This study therefore, focused on establishing the extent to which prevocational curriculum meets the vocational aspirations of students in Thika District.

2.2.2 Popularity of Prevocational Subjects in Secondary Schools

The popularity of vocational subjects in some schools has a lot to do with the immediate post secondary schools opportunity available to the students. According to Mwiria (2002) popular vocational subjects in Kenya and those available at most secondary schools in Kenya include Agriculture, Commerce and to a lesser extent Home science. These subjects according to Mwiria, are seen to be relevant as they require minimum physical inputs.

He found out that the vocationalised subjects tended to be more popular with academically weak students (due to the perception that they were easier) tended to cater for gender stereotypes and were more popular with economically disadvantaged backgrounds (as well as off parents had higher aspirations for their children). He also argues that the biggest obstacle to the successful implementation of the vocationalized curriculum was its limited

acceptance by most education stake holders outside of government because, It turned on to be an expensive system to implement for parents already burdened with other educational responsibilities with the onset of cost sharing.

Mwiria brings to the fore a number of important observations in relation to learners' interests/ aspirations these are-:

- a) Learners take those prevocational subjects that are interesting to them; Agriculture, commerce and Home Science.
- b) Parent's aspirations influence the interests of students to prevocational subjects.
- c) Students' perception about the subject as being easier or harder affects the choice of the subject.
- d) Cost of vocationalisation affect the acceptance of vocationalisation by parents. This may affect the perception of the subjects by the learners.

A few things have changed since the study was carried out.

First one is that; commerce as a subject has been replaced with business studies which integrates concept of accounts and economic to commerce. This may have changed the perception of the subjects.

Second one is that; Introduction of free primary education in 2003 has improved access and completion rate of primary education significantly. This has led to a great demand on secondary education and eventually a higher population of form four graduates who may not proceed for further education and training. This may have had an impact on interest in prevocational curriculum.

Thirdly, the introduction of free tuition secondary education in 2008 lightens the burdens of parent significantly, unlike the time Mwiria's study was done when the policy of cost

sharing impacted heavily on them: perception of parents might have changed significantly with the introduction of free tuition secondary education and consequently affecting the perception of the learners.

Fourthly, the devolved fund, Constituency Development Fund (C.D.F) lightens the burden of the parents further as the funds are sometimes used to improve structural needs in schools. This solves the problem of acceptance of prevocational subjects by parents further and hence may have reduced negative influence on their children as far as vocationalisation is concerned.

In short, the popularity of vocationalisation and prevocational curriculum by both the students and the schools might have significantly changed due to the above changes.

Also due to the current socio-economic realities associated with globalization and technology, learners are becoming more aware of the needs for vocational /technical skills relevant to labour market, further studies and self-reliance.

2.30 Provision of Prevocational Subjects in Secondary Schools

Most of the study carried out on provision of prevocational subjects focused on challenges of implementation of vocalized subjects and cost benefit ratio. For example, Olaniyan and Ojo (2007) in Ghana studied on the challenges of implementation of introductory technology, Jung and Belbase studied on the issues related to the characteristics of students, employment and finally accepts of vocational programs. For this study, the focus is on the extent to which prevocational subjects meet students' vocational aspirations in secondary schools. Mwiria (2002) asserts that interests in vocationalisation of the secondary school curriculum dates back to the mid 1970s and early 1980s following the recommendations of two government appointed commissions, that is N.C.E.O.P (1976) and the Presidential Working Party for the Establishment of Second University in Kenya

“Mackay” (1981). The prevocational skills were expected to prepare learners for the world of work.

However, Ogula (2009) observes that although there was extensive consultation between K.I.E and teachers during curriculum development no needs assessment surveys among student were carried out before the development of the new material.

Likewise, rationalization of curriculum in 2003 has led to situation in which a school anywhere in Kenya may disregard the vocational needs and aspiration of students despite the fact that some students are not academically gifted while others have a genuine interest in vocational subjects.

Lauglo (2005) notes that while some pupils would profit from purely academic training, others would benefit from more vocational and technical training; the nation needs both types of talents in appropriate proportions.

The question for which the answer is being sort is then do those pupils who would benefit from a more vocational and technical training find relevant courses that meet the vocational aspiration in secondary schools in Thika district. From the available literature such study has not been done in Thika district.

Mwiria (2002) and Lauglo (2005) vocationalisation of curriculum was institutionalized in Kenyan secondary schools in 1986 following the Mackay report of 1981 (Republic of Kenya, 1981). The prevocational skills were expected to prepare learners for the world of work.

However, due to many criticisms on the broad curriculum, the curriculum was rationalized in 2003. Rationalization of the secondary school education included curriculum size, and

the number of subjects was reduced from 35 to 21 in 2003 but this has steadily increased to 31. Technical subjects namely woodwork, metalwork, Aviation, drawing and design, building construction, electricity and power mechanics have been reintroduced into the secondary curriculum. The reintroduction of the technical subjects was a result of recommendations made in the Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 on a policy framework for education, training and research, which stated among other things that a breakthrough towards industrialization can only be achieved through application of technology. It was therefore necessary to give prominence to technology education in all sub sectors.

However, out of 31 subjects, students choose only 11 of these subjects in form one and two; seven to nine in form three and four. To sit for the minimum of seven subjects at K.C.S.E a student would be required to take the three core subjects that is, Mathematics, English and Kiswahili, then two science subjects, Chemistry, Biology and Physics. The balance is two subjects which he or she can take one from the category of humanity and one from the category of prevocational subjects. This implies that given the great autonomy schools have, a school can provide only one prevocational subject to all students to choose from and that different schools can provide different types of prevocational curriculum for students to select from. Therefore, all students would not be given equal opportunity to study vocational/ technical subjects according to their interests and talents which is against the social- political goals of providing vocationalised curriculum (Lauglo,2005). To remain viable and important vocationalisation should aim at serving the interest of the student and the society. Osei (2004) asserts that attempts at vocationalisation are being reconstructed to serve the clients aspirations.

This study, therefore examines how well the prevocational subjects provided to students fulfill their vocational aspirations. The findings from this study will therefore attempt to

reveal how well different aspirations / interests of the students are met. The findings will be useful to the policy makers in the process of improving secondary school as curriculum as envisaged in vision 2030. It is also expected that useful information will be generated that will help school administrator in planning of the pre-vocational subjects for the school

2.3.1 K.I.E and KNEC and the kind of Prevocational Subjects Provided

Education in Kenya is directly influenced by the government policies and is therefore constantly changing according to socio-economic and political trends. The Ministry of Education (MOE) together with the Ministry of Higher Education (MOEST) is responsible for providing Education to its citizens. The Kenya institute of Education (K.I.E) a semi-autonomous governmental agency is responsible for Educational research and the development of the curriculum for all levels except universities.

K.I.E is focused on providing of quality relevant and affordable education and training programmes in response to an ever changing social, economic and technological environment. The initiators are met through continuous research, Evaluation and monitoring of process.

K.I.E works closely with the Kenya National Examinations Council (K.N.E.C) the examining body responsible for developing and assessing National Examination at various levels of learning except universities

K.I.E therefore prepare prevocational curriculum making recommendations on prevocational subjects to be provided in schools. Currently, according to K.I.E syllabus, (Republic of Kenya, 2002) the subjects recommended by K.I.E for Kenya secondary schools including schools in Thika District are:

Home Science	Building and Construction
Art and Design	Power Mechanics
Agriculture	Aviation Technology
Wood Work	Computer Studies
Metal Work	Electricity

As can be seen eleven subjects have been provided by the K.I.E for schools to choose from. These can go along way in catering for much of the individual learners needs and interests in line with the national goal of education, that is, education should promote the individual development and self-fulfillment (Republic of Kenya, 2003).

However, according to the Kenya National Examination Council Regulation (Republic of Kenya, 2009), which is responsible for evaluation prevocational subjects nationally, a student should sit for one of the above prevocational subjects at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E).

Now, since our education is examination oriented, this, seemingly “lightens” the burden for the schools administration in that a school can choose to ignore the needs and interest of the learners by providing one of the above subjects without being faulted. This could in effect deny many students an opportunity to do more or less relevant prevocational subjects in line with their ability, aptitude and interest. At the same time different schools within Kenya may provide different types and numbers of prevocational subjects which leads to significant inequality. KNEC has been blamed as being one of the biggest obstacles to the learning of vocational skills, since none of prevocational subjects is compulsory, but all of them are electives. There is no way of ensuring that most students enroll for vocational subjects at K.C.S.E.

Although provision of all the prevocational subjects recommended would be too ambitious considering the limitations of resources and other factors discussed latter in literature review, K.I.E has done well to provide a variety of prevocational subjects and as the saying goes variety is the spice of life.

2.3.2 School Administration in Provision of Prevocational Subjects

The role of the principal of secondary schools in Kenya include the management of the curriculum and instruction, staff personnel, finance, business, student personnel and community relations.

However, Mbiti (2007) asserts that the core of the school administration is in the provision of a sound curriculum for the child. In this line the principal is involved in the translation of the education policies and objectives into programmes within the school. Where policies allow the school to make choices from among alternatives like in the case of prevocational curriculum: he or she provides the leadership. The principal is required to follow the ministry of education guidelines and is entrusted to use his discretion, initiative and good faith when making choices for the school to the benefits of the learner and the society.

He/she is responsible for the provision of physical and material resources in support of education programs which entails planning, acquisition, allocation, distribution and maintenance of physical facilities.

The perception of the principal on prevocational subjects is likely to affect the types and the number of these subjects provided by the school among the alternatives recommended by K.I.E. The valid and varied interest of the learners as far as prevocational subjects are concerned may be addressed or ignored.

However, Lang, (1992) observes that in order to achieve the national goals of education, the educational needs of those students who are not academically oriented as well as those who are willing and able to be prepared for an engagement in sophisticated technologies (in our case prevocational curriculum) has to be met.

2.3.3 Heads of Department

Heads of departments (H.O.Ds) are senior members of staff in schools. H.O.Ds technical/vocational (prevocational) curriculum is the chief advisor to the principal on the provision of resources to the department.

He is a team leader of his department and advisor to the principal on the need to or not diversify the pre vocational curriculum based on the K.I.E guidelines.

Finally, efficiently run school strikes a balance between treating children as individuals and catering for the good of the greatest number of the students.

2.4 Challenges Facing Effective Provision of Prevocational Curriculum

Effective provision of prevocational subjects in secondary schools in developing countries has been made difficult by a number of more or less common factors that have been reported from several studies carried out in developing countries example include studies done in three countries Nepal, Nigeria, and Kenya.

In Nepal, Belbase and Jung (1984) carried a study to attempt to analyze the perceptions of selected Nepal planners and implementers concerning certain basic issues which have been influencing the planning and implementation of vocational curriculum in Nepal. They found that planners and implementers had different attitudes concerning issues related to the characteristics of students, employment and final aspects of vocational programs. One specific finding was that implementers felt that the students could make

vocational choices at the age of 14 or 15, whereas the planners were uncertain. Also the implementers felt the vocational education was too expensive for Nepal, while the planners tended to disagree with them about this.

In Nigeria Olaniyan and Ojo (2007) studied on the challenges of implementation of introductory technology which is an integrated subject of woodwork, metal work, building technology, auto mechanic, Electrical/Electronics and Technical drawing at their basic level. This was introduced in Nigeria Junior Secondary schools in 1982. He found out that poor funding, lack of tools and equipments, unavailability of instructional materials and nonchalant attitude of government were some of the challenges facing the implementation of that vocationalised subjects.

Also a study done to identify constraints to effective implementation of vocational education program in private school in Nigeria in Port Harcourt local government area by Puyate (2008) revealed a dearth of professional and qualified teachers for teaching of vocational/ technical subjects, inadequate infrastructure and equipment in schools, insufficient instructional materials and books in schools and that schools were generally poorly financed.

Finally, in Kenya, Mwiria on vocationalisation on secondary; Kenya case study, cited by Lauglo (2005) urges that the biggest obstacle to successful implementation of vocationalised is lack of acceptance by most educational stakeholders, He also include shortage of teachers and inadequate teacher training. At the same time the curriculum was too ambitions and falsely assumed that vocationalized education was capable of resolving the youth unemployment problem without addressing the underlying causes of the problem of employment.

In short, there are genuine factors that tend to limit schools from providing wide prevocational curriculum enough to meet the interests of many learners. These may include: - acceptance of vocationalized curriculum by educational stakeholders; shortage of qualified teachers; inadequate infrastructure; inadequate equipments; inadequate funding; cost-effectiveness of the programs; differences in perceptions between the planners and the implementers; administrative inefficiencies; overcrowding of timetable.

Concerning these, Lauglo (2005) asserts that that more than any other factor it is likely that perception of vocational education in colonial era proved fatal to the vocationalisation of secondary education. This is because European colonial powers introduced dual education and training heritage, to Sub-Saharan African colonies with the provision of vocational courses as a “second class” education for the children of the colonized and an “academic” education for the children of the colonizers. Vocational educational was thus perceived as negative and inferior to academic education.

This perception passed to students by those who help them to make decision on what to study influence them to purpose not to study traditional vocational technical subjects. However, as things are today their perception about prevocational brought about by modern socio-economic and technological changes could be different. Despite all these obstacles the prevocational subjects in Kenya have persisted for over two decades.

Further, Makori (2000) his case study of Ghana vocationalised secondary education notes vocationalization still enjoys a high degree of support 50% of students at senior secondary schools level (Form 4 and 5) and teachers surveyed called for intensification of vocationalization policy at secondary level. At the same time prevocational subjects has However, there is lack of research study to match the subjects provided to the genuine needs and interest for the skills they can use in future.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes research methodology and design which was used to analyse prevocational subjects in relation to vocational aspirations of students of secondary schools in Thika District. The chapter is subdivided into the following subsections: research design , location of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling, research instruments, pilot study and validity and reliability of research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher employed a descriptive survey study design in the study. According to Orodho (2005) the descriptive survey mainly describes and explains the present status, situation and trends it allows the researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification. Therefore, survey design allows for extensive research on existing conditions and it is recommended for social sciences.

3.3 Study Locale

This study was conducted in Thika District, Kiambu County. Thika district is one of the eleven districts of Central Province. According to Kenya national bureau of statistics, Thika office, the District covers an area of 1960.2 sq km and borders Nairobi North district to the south, Gatundu district to the west, Murang'a south to the north and Yatta district to the East. The district is densely populated with distribution varying from one division to another. Population density is estimated at 329 persons per sq km. From Thika district development plan (2008 - 2012) the district has productive land and enjoys proximity to Nairobi it also enjoys economic activity such as agriculture, tourism, trade

and industries. However, due to the population pressure, the land is fragmented and the environment quite degraded. The district faces all forms of poverty. The poverty preference stands at 36.6%. Performance in the national examinations has not been impressive. For example in 2007 K.C.S.E results the district managed to produce 105 'A's, 95 of these 'A's of which came from one national school. This implies that the other 92 of the total 93 secondary schools of the district managed to produce 10 'A's only. Other challenges include HIV/AIDs prevalence which pose a serious social economic challenge in the district.

3.4 Population of Study

The target population was all Principals, Heads of Department of Prevocational Subjects, career master/mistress, and form three students who takes prevocational subjects in the 69 secondary schools in Thika District. The 69 secondary schools were 2 National, 5 Provincial and 62 District Secondary Schools.

3.5 Sample and Sampling

For this study on analysis of the prevocational subjects in relation to students prevocational aspirations in Thika District, probability sampling method was adopted to establish a heterogeneous sample in terms of difference in aspiration levels and gender of the students. The schools were first categorized into National, Provincial and District schools to ensure representation of students by different aspiration levels. The schools were further stratified into boys only, girls only and mixed schools within each level to ensure representation by sex. Both simple random and purposive sampling were employed to select 4 girls only schools, 4 boys only schools and six mixed schools. A total of 14 schools (equivalent to 20%) out of 69 schools were selected.

Table 3.1: Sample Distribution

<i>Category of school</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Number sampled</i>	<i>% of sampled</i>
National	2	1	7%
Provincial	5	3	21%
District	62	10	72%
Total	69	14	100%

From the 69 schools, a total of 14 principals, 14 Heads of department and 14 career masters/deans of studies were selected using non random sampling-they came from the selected school above. Six form three students who take prevocational subjects were selected from each prevocational subject taught in respective schools through systematic sampling by use of class registers to ensure fair representation of all prevocational students in class. Therefore, 248 students were selected and the two sampling techniques yielded a sample size of 290 respondents.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

The main data collection instruments were four questionnaires that contained both structured and unstructured questions. The structured questionnaires were developed in such a way that the respondents would read the questions and pick response options that matched their opinions. On the other hand, in the unstructured questionnaires the items were developed in such away that the respondents were not provided with response options but rather gave a brief essay type response in one or two sentences.

The researcher ensured that the questionnaires elicited information that would provide answers to the research questions. At the same time similar questions were asked to different categories of respondents for triangulation purposes.

3.7 Piloting of Data Collection Instruments

Piloting was carried out to determine validity and reliability of instruments. Before the actual study, the research was conducted a pilot study in Kiambu East District. Kiambu East district borders Thika East district. It was chosen because it is ideal in that the subjects in the subjects in the District are similar to actual subjects in the District of study. The pilot research involved the collection of data from one mixed secondary school. The aim of the pilot study was to;

- i) Detect any ambiguity or vagueness of questions.
- ii) Detect the validity of the instruments.
- iii) Gain some experience on how to effectively administer the instruments.
- iv) Help to update the research instruments.

A test-retest method was used to estimate the reliability of the research instruments. The selection of the school was done using simple random sampling. The developed questionnaires and scheduled interviews was given personally to five identical subjects for study who were not be included in the actual study. Then the answered questionnaires was administered to same group of subject after a period of two weeks .The responses were scored manually. Then the comparison was made. A Pearson's product moment formula for the test retest was employed to compute the correlation coefficient in order to establish the extent to which the content of the questionnaire were reliable in eliciting the similar information when the same instrument is administered.

According to Orodho, (2008), a correlation of about 0.8 should be considered high enough to judge the instrument as reliable for the study. The validity of the instrument that is the extent to which an instrument measure what it is supposed to measure was determined through the advice of the supervisors and their recommendations will be included in the

final questionnaires.

3.7.1 Validity

The researcher adopted content validity to determine whether or not the measuring instruments were representative of the full content of what was to be measured. To validate, the researcher sought the opinion of the supervisors and other colleagues on content, clarity, ambiguity, level of language used and any other additional information needed to make the instruments more precise and concise. Following the suggestions made by supervisors, the researcher the final questionnaires that were used in the actual data collection.

3.7.2 Reliability

A test-retest method was carried out to estimate the reliability of the research instruments. One mixed secondary school was done purposively by convenience. The developed questionnaires and scheduled interviews were given personally to 5 identical subjects for study who were not included in study. Then the answered questionnaires were administered to same group of subjects after a period of two weeks. The responses were scored manually and comparison was made. Pearson product moment formula for the test retest was employed to compute the correlation coefficient in order to establish the extent to which the content of questionnaires were reliable in eliciting similar information when the same instrument is administered. Correlation coefficient $r = 0.85$ was obtained.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

After obtaining a research permit to collect data from the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Higher Education, the university and the District Education Officer, the researcher made a visit to the sampled schools to make an appointment and establish a rapport with the Principal and heads of departments of the prevocational curriculum,

during the visit the researcher explained the nature of the research and handed over to the principals a formal letters of permission to collect data in their schools. The researcher then visited the respondents at the agreed date and administered questionnaires personally to ensure that respondents did not consult one another and that the he clarified where necessary. After collecting the questionnaires the researcher thanked each principal and proceeded to the next stage of coding and data analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

According to Kerlinger (1973) Data analysis is the categorization, ordering, manipulation and summarizing of data to obtain answers to the research questions. The raw data from the field was organized and then coded for analysis.

The study being a descriptive survey design, the researcher analyzed the raw data using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). Gay (1992) assert that the commonly used method for reporting descriptive surveys is use of frequency distribution, calculation of percentages and tabulating them appropriately. This study being a descriptive survey design, the researcher analysed the raw data and presented the results using descriptive statistics. Relevant interpretation, discussion, conclusion and recommendations were made.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to establish the extent to which prevocational subjects are focused to meet secondary school students' vocational interests/aspirations in Thika District. This chapter presents the results of data analysis and their interpretation. The findings are presented according to the research questions that guided the study. The research questions were:-

What are the Students' Vocational Aspirations in Secondary Schools in Thika District?

What prevocational subjects are provided by different secondary schools in Thika district?

Which prevocational subjects are preferred by secondary school students in Thika district?

To what extent do prevocational subjects provided reflect the vocational aspirations of secondary school students in Thika District?

4.2 What are the Students' Vocational Aspirations in Secondary Schools in Thika District

The question that was posed to student was which career do you aspire to? Data was collected analysed and presented in table 4.1

Table 4.1 Vocational Aspirations of different Student by Gender (n= 248)

Career Aspirations	No. of Students		Percentage of Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Mean
Business Related	19	21	17.9	14.8	16.35
Law	7	16	6.6	11.3	8.95
Hospitality	8	19	7.5	13.4	10.45
Health	12	22	11.3	15.5	13.4
Engineering	21	24	21.7	16.9	19.3
Mass Media	7	11	6.6	7.7	7.15
National Security	3	1	2.8	0.7	1.75
Agriculture	5	10	4.7	7.04	5.87
Aviation	11	2	10.4	1.4	5.9
Education	1	3	0.9	2.1	1.5
Computer Technology	3	0	2.8	0	1.4
Art & Design	1	3	0.9	2.1	1.5
Building & Construction	0	0	0	0	0
Architecture	1	3	0.9	2.1	1.5
Weather forecast	0	2	0	1.4	0.7
Public and International Relations	0	1	3.8	0.7	2.25
Forensic	1	1	0.9	0.7	0.8
Total	106	142	100%	100%	100%

Table 4.1 represent the student vocational aspirations in secondary school in Thika district. The vocational aspiration are many and varied. However, majority (67.6%) of the student chose prestigious careers and those that have high labour market demand, that is, in decreasing order, engineering (19.5%), business relate career (16.35%), health (10.45%), law (9.25%) of the students.

A smaller (18.92%) group of student aspirations were moderate. They aspire for mass medal (7.15%), aviation (5.9%) and agriculture (5.87%). The rest of the student chose in decreasing order, national security (1.75%), education (1.5%), art & design (1.5%),

architecture (1.5%), and computer studies (1.4%) of the students . Also in this category student chose forensic (0.85%), weather forecasting (0.7%) and public relations (0.35%) of the students.

With (67.6%) of the students choosing prestigious careers, it was observed that the expressed students' vocational aspiration in secondary schools in Thika district is generally high.

Since the table 4.1 indicates that students vocational aspirations are many and varied, their prevocational curriculum required should likewise be wide enough to meet students' diverse needs. It should take into account the factors that influence vocational aspirations such as prestige level, gender, market demand and self efficacy.

The result in table 4.1 also display the disparity in student vocational aspirations by gender. For example, a higher percentage of girls than boys chose law and hospitality related careers.

On the other hand, a higher percentage of boys than girls chose aviation and engineering. This agree with the literature that gender is one of the factors that influence vocational aspirations of learners. To cater for students vocational aspirations that are many and varied, the spectrum of application of a prevocational subject should be considered. For example, computer skills will enhance all the careers aspire.

4.3 Which Prevocational Subjects are provided by different schools?

The second question was posed to the principals to establish the prevocational subjects provided in different secondary schools in Thika District. The data obtained was analysed and the results displayed in table 4.2(a).

Table 4.2 (a) Category of school and prevocational subjects provided in selected schools (n=14).

Prevocational Subjects	Category of school			Total	% of n
	National	Provincial	District		
Agriculture	1	3	10	14	100%
Art & Design	1	-	-	1	7%
Aviation	-	1	-	1	7%
Business Studies	1	1	14		100%
Computer Studies	1	2	-	3	21%
Drawing & Design	-	-	1	1	7%
Electricity	-	1	-	1	7%
Home Science	1	1	5	7	50%
Metal Work	-	1	-	1	7%
Wood Work	-	-	-	-	0%
Power Mechanics	-	-	-	-	0%
Building & Construction	-	-	-	-	0%

Table 4.2 (a) demonstrate that nine out of the twelve recommended prevocational subjects are provided in the selected secondary schools in Thika District. These subjects are Agriculture, Art & Design, Aviation technology, Business studies, Computer studies, Electricity, Home science, Drawing & Design and Metal work.

Three provocation subjects recommended by KIE syllabus are not provided in any of the secondary school selected in Thika District. These are wood work, power mechanics and building and construction.

Of the prevocational subjects provided in secondary schools in Thika District, agriculture and business studies are provided in all the 14 (100%) schools. Home science is provided in 7(50%) of all the schools while computer studies is provided in 3(21%) of the schools. Art & design, Aviation, Drawing & design, Electricity and Metal work are provided in one (7%) of the schools.

The study deduced that agriculture and business studies are the most popular prevocational subjects in schools. This was attributed to the low cost of introducing the subjects and maintain them. This is consistent with the literature. According to DFID paper (2007) some vocational subjects such as business studies and computer studies are no more costly than regular curriculum. In this study, when respondents were asked why other prevocational subjects which students are interested in are not provided majority (90%) identified the issue of cost as the main reason.

In addition the study found that Home science was mainly provided in girls schools and mixed schools only. This is consistent with the literature. Mwiria (2005) asserts that gender stereotype is one of the strongest factor in provision of vocational subjects. It is also argued that policy intentions may have had a negative effects on provision of prevocational curriculum. However, this study found one boys' school that provided Home science and the boys took it. This is an indication that Home science can find relevance in boys school. Non provision of Home science could be a disadvantage to boys whose career aspirations are in hospitality industry with some as future entrepreneurs.

Computer studies are provided in those secondary schools Thika district that had connections to main electricity supply. Most secondary schools in the District also indicate that they had intention of providing computer studies in their schools in future.

Those prevocational subjects that are provided in one school only, that is, art & design, aviation, electricity and metal works were offered only in provincial and national schools in Thika District. The researcher attributed this to fact that these subjects are cost intensive and difficult to introduce and maintain in schools with large population of students. Literature on vocational education do not recommend intensive vocational education for developing economy. However, with our country focused on becoming an industrializing country prevocational subjects such as power mechanics, electricity and metal work may get relevance because of the demand of these skills.

Drawing and designing was only offered in one school which happened to be a district school. Like agriculture and business studies the researcher felt that it may not be costly to introduce or maintain Drawing and design. Other considerations that were not identified in this study have led to the lack of its popularity to other secondary schools Thika District.

The study also found that the three prevocational subjects not provided in any secondary schools in Thika District, that is, wood work metal work, building and construction were not popular with schools. It was revealed that one of them, that is, wood work had been dropped in one of secondary school in Thika District that used to offer the subjects due to its unpopularity with students. A respondents from the school that dropped wood work said that the students felt that woodwork is a subject for the standard eight dropouts.

Table 4.2 (b) Number of subjects provided in different categories of schools selected (n=14)

No of Subject Provided	Category of schools			Total	%
	National	Provincial	District		
Two			5	5	36%
Three		1	4	5	36%
Four		1	1	2	14%
Five	1	1	0	2	14%
Total	1	3	10	14	100%

The result in table 4.2(b) indicates that all the secondary schools in Thika District selected provided at least two prevocational subjects. 5 (36%) of the secondary schools in Thika district provided only two prevocational subjects and all of them were districts schools. Another 5 (36%) of the secondary schools in Thika district provided three prevocational subjects and four of these schools were district schools while one of them was a provincial school. 2 (14%) of the secondary schools in the district provided four subjects and one of them was a district school and the others were provincial school. Another 2 (14%) of the secondary school in Thika District provided five prevocational subjects; one of them was a provincial school while the other was a national school.

The result implies that District secondary schools in Thika districts have been left behind in the provision of prevocational subjects. It can be argued that generally students in the district schools have less options when it comes to choosing of prevocational subjects as compared to a students in provincial and national schools in Thika districts. This disparity is a disadvantage to a student in district secondary school in Thika district .It is of great concern especially when we take into account that students in provincial and national

schools are normally the one who score grades high enough to be admitted to the university. This consistent with available literature. Ogula (2005) asserts that limited diversification has not given students equal opportunity to study vocational and technical subjects in accordance to their interest and talents.

To overcome this inequality, all the educational stakeholders should take the advantage of tuition waiver in secondary school, C.D.F, economic stimulus package and computer for school programme to bring on improvement on provision of prevocational subjects. These will help to narrow the disparity in the provision of prevocational subjects among different secondary schools in Thika districts.

The principals from the selected were asked to rate the criteria of distributing students to various prevocational subjects in their schools. Data was collected, analyzed and the result displayed in table 4.2(c)

Table 4.2(c) Criteria of Distributing Students to Various Prevocational Subjects available in secondary schools in Thika district.

	To Large Extent	To Small Extent	To Limited Extent	To no Extent	Mean X	Decision on extent
Outcome of Assessment	16	12	2	3	2.75	Some Extent
Need & Aspiration of Students	28	15	-	-	3.58	Large Extent
Available Workshop Capacity	16	6	2	5	2.42	Some Extent
Wish & Parent Aspiration	81	12	2	4	2.2	Less Extent
Interest In Another Subjects		15	6	4	2.1	Less Extent

To a large extent=4. To small extent=3. To limited extent=2. To no extent =1

The result in table 4.2 (c) shows that the criteria used to distribute students into various prevocational subjects available in secondary schools in Thika District include outcome of assessment, aspiration of students, available workshop capacity, parents wish and interest in other subjects. The first three that is outcome of assessment, needs and aspirations of the students and available workshop capacity appear to be the commonly used method. The researcher observed that it is not possible to meet the needs and aspirations of the students in secondary schools in Thika District when workshop capacity and outcomes of assessment are used as criteria of distributing students to various prevocational subjects.

4.4 Which are the prevocational subjects preferred by students?

The third question was posed to students to establish which prevocational subjects were preferred by the students to what they take. Data was collected, analyzed and the results presented in table 4.3

Table 4.3 Prevocational subjects preferred by students compared to the prevocational subject they are taking currently (n=248)

Prevocational subject	No. of students who Prefer it as no 1	No. of students current taking the subject	Deviation
Agriculture	63	93	-30
Aviation	26	1	+25
Art & Design	8	2	+6
Building & Construction	2	0	+2
Business Studies	69	92	-23
Computer Studies	25	11	+14
Electricity	14	9	+5
Home science	29	37	-8
Metal work	2	3	-1
Wood work	1	0	+1
Power mechanics	3	0	+3
Drawing & Design	3	0	+3
	248	248	0

Table 4.3 indicates that the subjects taken by most students in decreasing order are agriculture (93), business studies (92), home science (37) and computer studies (11). However, the prevocational subjects most preferred by students in t decreasing order are business studies (69), agriculture (63), Home science (29), aviation (26) computer studies (25) and electricity (14).

It can be deduced from the result in table 4.5 that Agriculture, business studies and home science are the top three most popular subjects in secondary schools in Thika District. The students perceive these prevocational subjects as easy to pass and therefore would boost their mean grade. However, students had another reason for choosing one of three subjects.

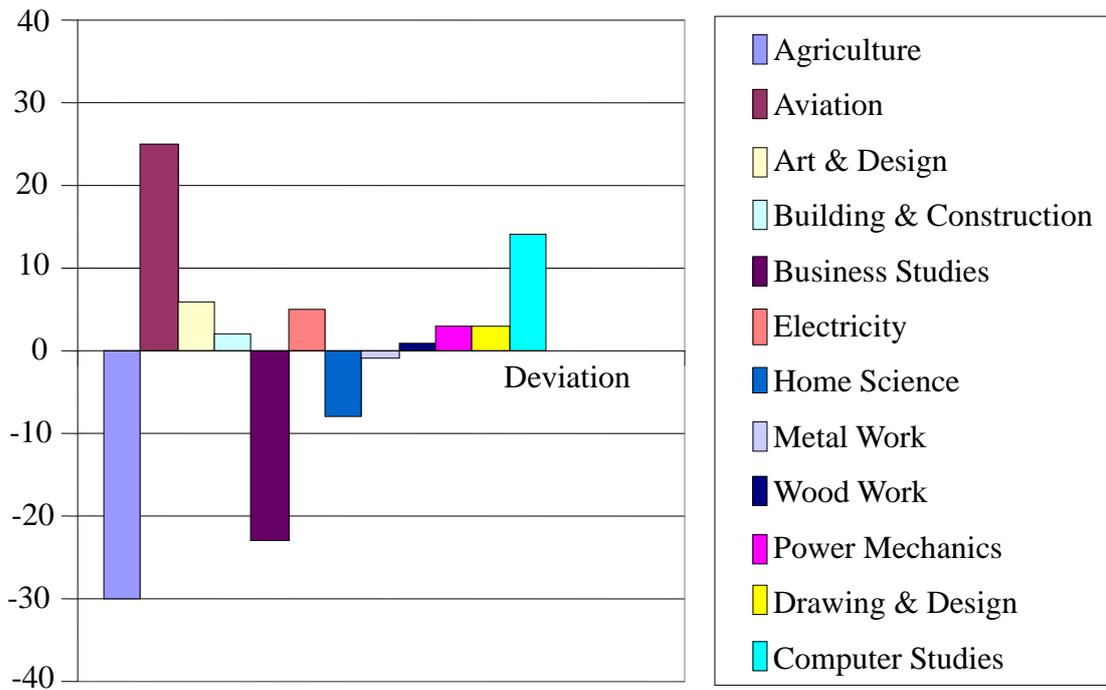
The study also found out that some of the prevocational subjects the secondary school students in Thika district are taking are not the same subjects they would take if they had opportunity and freedom to choose from a whole spectrum of prevocational as contained in the K.I.E syllabus. This reveals that some students' vocational aspirations are not yet met by the prevocational subjects provided in secondary schools in Thika district. According to Agula (2009), the selection of subject is dependant on what each of the individual schools offers.

At the same time it can be deduced that if new subjects were to be introduced by secondary schools in Thika District which have been providing, for instance, two prevocational subjects the choices should be made from home science , aviation technology, computer studies and electricity because they follow Agriculture and Business studies in popularity.

On the other side table 4.3 indicate low preference of power mechanics (3) drawing & designing (3) metals work (2) and building and construction (2) in secondary school in Thika district despite our country's aspirations of becoming middle income industrializing country by 2030.

The deviations in table 4.3 can be represented in a bar graph as follows in figure 4.1

Figure 4.1: Deviations between the prevocational subject provided and prevocational subject the students would prefer



The greatest negative (-30) deviation is in Agriculture, followed by Business Studies (-23), and then Home Science. This implies that if all prevocational subjects were provided in all the schools sampled, many students would shift from taking Agriculture and Home Science to other subjects. Shift to and from Metal Work and Wood Work would be minimal.

The greatest positive deviations are in Aviation (+25), followed by Computer (+14) and the Electricity. This implies that if all prevocational subjects were provided in all schools

sampled many students would shift from what they are currently taking to Aviation, Computer Studies, Art and Design and Electricity.

Raj (2010) observes that, generally a negative attitude towards a given subject leads to lack of interest in it and when subjects are to be selected, it leads to avoiding the subject. However, sometimes it is hard for students to avoid subjects for which they have low interest because of the school selection criteria and resource availability and the effect is as in figure 4.1. Ogula (2009) observes that the selection of subjects is dependent on what each of the individual schools offer. Therefore, while, prevocational subjects allow experimentation of career paths and inform future career decisions as well as give a head start in careers, students from schools with a narrow prevocational curriculum are disadvantaged.

4.5 To what extent do prevocational subjects provided reflect the vocational aspirations of secondary school students in Thika District?

When the principals were asked whether the prevocational subjects provided reflected the students vocational aspirations, slight Majority (58%) of them indicated that there was no significant match between what was provided and the students vocational aspirations .A slight minority (42%) felt that what was provided reflected the vocational aspirations of the students. The researcher attributed the differences in opinion to the fact that different schools provided different number and types of prevocational subjects. For example, where a school provided 5 pre vocational subjects, most of the vocational aspirations of the students were more likely to be met than in a situation where only one or two prevocational subjects were provided. Further, in schools where most students are likely to score high grades at K.C.S.E that would enable them to be admitted to the University their eyes were focused on higher education. One teacher in a school where metal work is

offered commented that;

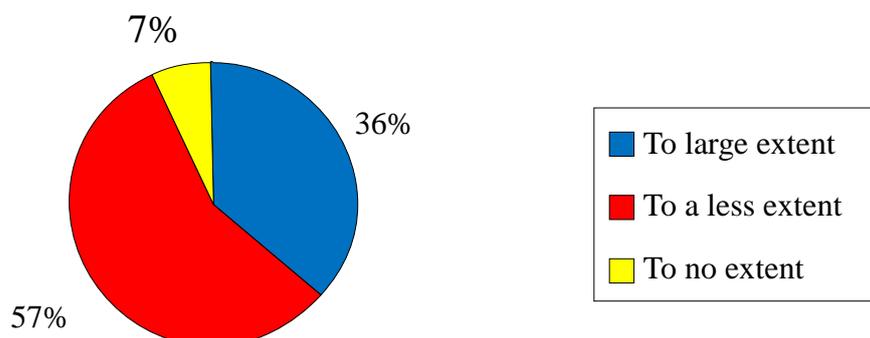
‘Most students do not take metal work in this school because they fear that it will take a lot time that they need to attain good grades for University courses’.

On other side, where a school provided fewer prevocational subjects, it was observed that in most cases the school also happened to be a district school with fewer resources. The principals of these schools felt that the prevocational subjects take do not reflect the vocational aspirations of their students. This study found that when a school is young the secondary school students in Thika district are likely to be disadvantaged as far as prevocational learning opportunities are concerned. On the other hand when Deans of students or Career masters/mistress were asked to rate the extent to which the prevocational curriculum related to vocational aspirations of the students. The results of analysis of data collected is shown in table 4.4 and figure 4.2(a).

Table 4. 4. Career Masters/Mistress rating of the Extent to which Prevocational Subjects provided relate to students Vocational Aspirations

Rating	Frequency	%
To large extent	5	36%
To a less extent	8	57%
To no extent	1	7%
Total	14	100%

Figure 4.2(a) Career Masters/Mistress Rating of Extent to which Prevocational Subjects provided relate Students Aspirations



The results in table 4.4 indicated that the majority 8 (57%) felt that prevocational subjects reflected vocational aspirations to a small extent while 5 (36%) felt that the reflection was to a large extent. On the other hand, 1 (7%) felt that there was no match between the prevocational subjects provided and the student vocational aspirations in Thika District.

The study observed that the data from majority of the career master/mistress (58%) was consistent with the data from the principals (57%) on the match between the prevocational subjects provided and the vocational aspirations of secondary school students in Thika District.

However, the study observed that the career masters/mistress had different feelings as to why there was no match between the prevocational subjects provided and the vocational aspirations of the secondary schools in Thika District. First, they felt that the prevocational subjects offered in secondary schools in Thika district do necessarily focus on career because the main goal by both the school and the students is to select subjects that will boost K.C.S.E mean grade irrespective of the career orientation.

Second, some students in secondary schools in Thika District are compelled to take prevocational subjects that are not their own choice due to inadequacy of resources. One career master said that good pass in Mathematics was used to screen students who would take popular prevocational subjects in her school.

Third, overtime most students in secondary schools in Thika District have realized that these subjects are not considered as a prerequisite for further vocational training or higher education.

Fourth, there is lack of effective career guidance secondary schools in Thika District to help the students match their vocational aspirations the prevocational subjects provided.

Fifth, some students in secondary schools in Thika District discourage others from taking certain subjects. For example, agriculture is referred to as a subject for the rural students while Home science is referred to as a hobby subject.

Lastly, some felt that there was lack of initiative by some of the schools managers. The study found that for the prevocational subjects to match the vocational aspirations of the secondary school students in Thika District, all the stakeholders should join hands to overcome all these challenges revealed by the principals and the career masters and mistress.

When the students of secondary school in Thika District were asked to rate the extent to which the prevocational subjects match their vocational aspiration, majority (71%) felt that there were prevocational subjects of interest to them that were not provided. So they would not take the prevocational subjects they are taking if they had the opportunity to select a subject of choice from the wide spectrum of prevocational subjects. Some of the prevocational subjects most students liked but are not provided include computer,

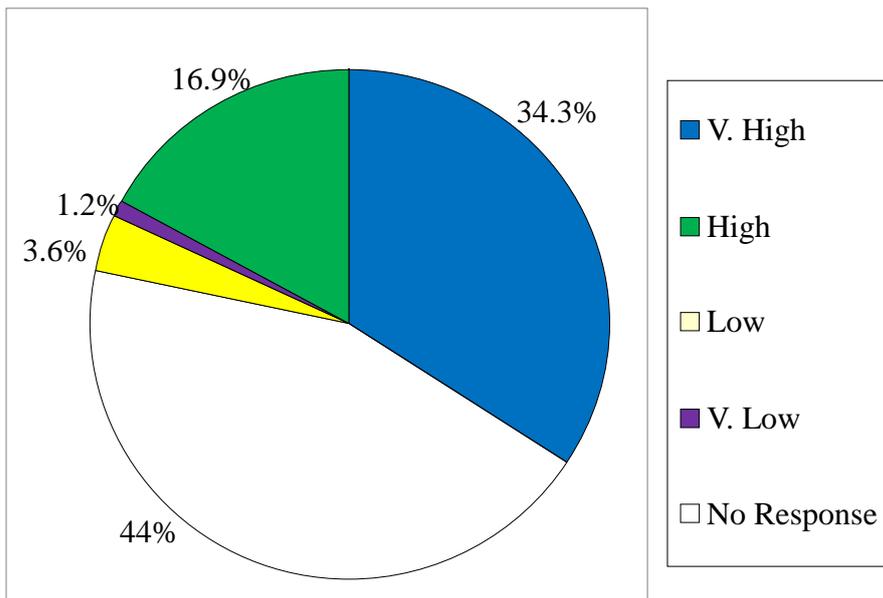
electricity and aviation.

Therefore, most principals, career masters/mistress and the students were in agreements that the prevocational subjects provided were not matching the vocational aspirations of the secondary school students in Thika District.

From the illustrations in figure 4.2 (a) over 64% of Deans of students / Career masters/mistress are of the view that prevocational curriculum provided by schools does not relate to students career to a large extent.

Finally, the students were asked to rate the chances that they were likely to apply the prevocational skills that are gaining. The data was collected, analysed and displayed in table 4.5

Figure 4.2(b) The likelihood that students will apply acquired vocational skills



Most (77.3%) of the students in secondary schools in Thika district felt that the chance that they would apply the prevocational skills acquired range from high to very high. Minority (22.5%) felt that the chance that they will apply these skills range from low to very low.

When the results of the chances that students will use the provocation skills are compared to their analysis of whether the prevocational subjects match their vocational aspirations, the two seem to contradict. However, the study found that some students felt that the skills would be used for side business to generate capital to pursue their aspirations. For other students they felt that the skills would be used in alternative plan in case they will not get high score for the most preferred careers. This is in agreement with literature. Akyeamong. (2007) notes that school factors such as the subject emphasized in a school appear to contribute to interest in certain career. King and martin (2000) in a study on career choice found that some students interest in certain jobs reflect Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) subjects they have been exposed to.

Therefore, though prevocational subjects do not necessarily match the vocation aspiration of students of secondary schools in Thika District, the skills acquired are likely to be applied as stepping stones to vocational aspiration by some students of secondary schools in Thika District. This reveals that more attention and support is needed to align the provision of prevocational subjects to vocational aspirations of secondary school students in Thika District.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The main purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which prevocational subjects are focused to meet vocational aspirations of secondary school students in Thika district.

From the background information and the literature review it was clear that no study had been done on analysis of prevocational subjects provided and the vocational aspirations of secondary school students in Thika district. As such this study was necessary.

The research was guided by the following research questions:-

- (i) What are the Students' Vocational Aspirations in Secondary Schools in Thika District?
- (ii) What prevocational subjects are provided by different secondary schools in Thika district?
- (iii) Which prevocational subjects are preferred by secondary school students in Thika district?
- (iv) To what extent do prevocational subjects provided reflect the vocational aspirations of secondary school students in Thika District?

Data was collected, analysed and the result presented as indicated in chapter four of this study. The result of the analysis of the data enabled the researcher to come up with four main findings based on the four research questions.

- **Vocational aspirations of students**

The study found that the vocational aspirations of secondary school students in Thika district were many and varied. At the same time they are skewed towards prestigious careers like engineering, medicine, law and managerial positions in business. This implied that the vocational aspirations of majority of students in secondary schools in Thika District was generally high.

- **Prevocational subjects provided by different secondary schools**

Nine of the eleven prevocational subjects recommended by the M.O.E are provided in secondary schools in Thika district. Generally, provincial and national schools provided a much wider prevocational curriculum compared to district secondary schools which provide a narrower curriculum. Most secondary schools in Thika provided Agriculture and Business studies as the only prevocational subjects. On the other hand, provincial and national schools provided other prevocational subjects in on top of Agriculture and Business studies-This is inequality in education in that most of the students in district schools are disadvantaged in terms of options available to them.

The study also found that some prevocational subjects were not offered in the schools sampled. The prevocational subjects not offered are power mechanics, Building and construction, and wood work. This means that these prevocational subjects were not are not popular with the school managers.

- **Prevocational subjects preferred by students**

Most students prefer prevocational subjects that relate to their vocational aspirations and those that help them cope with the technology oriented economy. The study also found that most students would continue taking the same prevocational subjects they have developed a positive altitude towards the subjects over time. However, a good number of

the students still feels that they would shift to another prevocational subjects if the whole spectrum of spectrum of prevocational subjects was available in their schools. It was also found that there were cases in some schools where students were denied to take certain prevocational subjects because of low performance in another more academic subject like mathematics.

- **Extent to which the prevocational subject provided reflect students' vocational aspirations**

The study found out that the prevocational subjects provided relate to vocational aspirations only to a less extent. However, this should not be misconstrued to mean that the prevocational subjects provided are not valued by the students. On the contrary, most students feels that they will most likely apply the knowledge and skills they are gaining from the prevocational subjects they take, despite the match with their vocational aspirations.

5.2 Conclusion

The study made the following conclusion based on the findings from the four research questions.

First, it may require a very wide prevocational curriculum to cater for the diverse students' vocational aspirations in secondary schools in Thika District. This may not be practically possible in one single school.

Secondary, there is unnecessary disparity between the number and the type of prevocational subjects provided by provincial and national schools as compared to the prevocational subjects provided in district secondary schools in Thika District. Students in District secondary schools are disadvantaged by being offered a narrow prevocational

curriculum. Third, very narrow prevocational curriculum need to be widened to cater for the students who have a genuine interest in prevocational subjects. This would assist the students who will join the District secondary schools in future. Criteria of distribution of students into different prevocational subjects disadvantage students. This particularly so for students who are denied the opportunity to study a certain prevocational subject because of low performance in a more academic subject for example, low performance in Mathematics.

Fourth, a lot is needed to be done to improve the extent to which prevocational subjects reflect vocational aspirations of the learners. Otherwise, the fact that majority of students feels that they will use the skills acquired justify continued provision of prevocational subjects.

5.3 Recommendations

Following the findings on analysis of the provision of prevocational subjects and vocational aspirations of secondary schools in Thika District recommendations were made based on the four research questions.

- **Students should be enabled to have more realistic vocational aspirations**

The M.O.E should ensure that there is effective guidance and counseling departments in secondary school composed of trained teams in career guidance and counseling.

- **Provision of prevocational subjects should be improved**

The M.O.E should formulate policies that will enable reduced inequality in provision of learning opportunities. This could include sharing of resources among schools that are close to each other – for instance, among Chania Boys, Chania Girls and Thika Boys. The government should ensure that the programme of computers for schools benefit most

schools with particular emphasis to schools which are least able.

- **Prevocational subjects preferred by many students should be made available to most students**

Principals should ensure that the criteria of distributing students into various prevocational subjects benefit majority of the students who are talented and genuinely interested. The extent to which prevocational subjects provided reflect vocational aspirations of the students should be enlarged. The M.O.E through the K.I.E should remove the subjects that are not preferred by students from the syllabus. The subjects that need to be removed include woodwork and Building and construction. This could be done after wide assessments beyond Thika District. Similarly, the M.O.E through the K.I.E should review the prevocational curriculum to ensure that the skills taught in secondary schools find relevance for further education.

- **Prevocational subjects should be made to relate closely to students' vocational aspirations**

The K.I.E should come up with prevocational subjects whose skills are required across many vocational aspirations such as entrepreneurial skills.

5.4 Suggested Areas for Further Research

Further areas of research on prevocational curriculum suggested are;

1. To find out whether similar findings to this research are applicable to any other peri-urban district of Kenya.
2. To find out to what extent the current prevocational relate to Kenya's aspiration of being transformed into a newly industrializing, middle-income by 2030.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS

Information provided will only be used for research work on prevocational curriculum for vocational aspirations of secondary school students and will be treated confidentially

SECTION A: Background Information of Respondent

1. a Name school _____
- b (i) Category of school
Public [] Private []
- ii. Further categorize the school
Mixed [] Girls [] Boys []
- iii. If public, further category
National [] Provincial [] District []
2. Gender of principal
Male [] Female []
3. Qualifications
Diploma [] Bachelor Degree []
MED [] Any other (specify) _____
4. Area of training
Language [] Science and math []
Humanities [] Prevocational subjects []
Foreign languages [] Others []
5. Length of service in the school
Less than 5 yrs [] 5 to 10 yrs [] More than 10 yrs []

6. Student population

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|
| Below 200 | [] | 401 – 500 | [] |
| 201 – 300 | [] | Above 500 | [] |

SECTION B

7. Number of students who got mean grade of D+ and above in 2010 K.C.S.E results

_____ out of _____ students.

8. What is the number of students taking each of the following prevocational subjects?

Agriculture _____

Home science _____

Wood work _____

Metal work _____

Building & construction _____

Computer studies _____

Drawing and design _____

Business studies _____

Aviation _____

Electricity _____

9. The distribution of student to above different prevocational subjects is carried out on the basis of:

Basis of Distribution of students	To a large extent	To some extent	To very Limited extent	To no extent
a) Outcome of student assessment by teachers.				
b) Needs and aspirations of students.				
c) Available workshop capacity.				
d) Wish and aspirations of parents.				
e) Student interest in another subject.				

f) Any other (please specify?) _____

10. a) Is there a mismatch between what the students would prefer to take and what is provided to them in terms of prevocational curriculum?

Yes [] Not sure [] No []

b) If the answer to (a) above is Yes, what are the major reasons for the mismatch _____

11. (a) Has the school dropped any prevocational subject within the last seven years?

Yes [] No []

(b) If yes; why?

Lack of interest from learners [] Poor performance []

Lack of qualified teachers [] Cost of maintenance []

12. (a) Is there a prevocational subject(s) that the school wish to expand or introduce?

Yes [] No []

(b) If yes, which subject(s) _____

(c) What is the main reason for the wish to expand or introduce (please tick)

Student high interest [] Easy to pass []

Help in improving mean grade [] Complement other subjects []

Any other reason_____

13. Is there prevocational subjects in prevocational curriculum the students would be attract to but the school is not able to provide.

Yes [] No []

If yes, what are the limiting factors?

Teacher's shortage

To great extent []

To some extent []

Less extent []

Cost of workshop, construction, maintenance

To great extent [] Less extent []

To some extent []

Cost of equipment

To great extent []

To some extent []

Less extent []

14. According to schools performance most pupils are likely to fit in

Post secondary path	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure
Self employment					
Salaried employment					
Further vocation training					
Further education in the university					

9. a) Is there a prevocational subject(s) that is liked by very many students such that you have to device ways of limiting the number to match the resources available?

Yes []

No []

b) (i) If yes, which prevocational subject(s) is it? _____

(ii) How do you limit the number? _____

c) Which other challenge do you face when students are choosing prevocational subjects? _____

10. (a) Which of the prevocational subject(s) in question No.6 do you think would be of interest to many learners and is achievable but not provided in the school.

(b) What are the probable reasons for not providing the subject(s) in 10. (a)?

11. Are the prevocational needs of the learners sufficiently met to match their vocational aspirations? (*Please tick*)

Yes [] No [] Not sure []

12. Is there a need to diversify prevocational curriculum in your department?

13. In which areas have you felt the need to diversify or expand the prevocational curriculum?

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CAREER MASTERS / DEAN OF STUDENTS /
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING MASTERS**

Information provided will only be used for research work on prevocational curriculum for vocational aspirations of secondary school students and will be treated confidentially.

SECTION A: Background Information of Respondent

1. Name of school _____
2. Gender
Male Female
3. Highest academic and professional qualifications
Diploma Bachelor Degree
Post graduate degree Any other (specify) _____

SECTION B

4. What are your teaching subjects?

5. Which of the following prevocational subjects does your school offer?

(Please tick appropriately)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> | Computer studies | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Art and Design | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drawing and design | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Business studies | <input type="checkbox"/> | Electricity | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Building of construction | <input type="checkbox"/> | Home science | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Aviation | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood work | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Metal work | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

6. (a) Which prevocational subject do most students prefer to take in your school and which one is least preferred prevocational subjects?

Most preferred _____

Least preferred _____

(b) What reasons do the students give for the preference?

For most preferred _____

For least preferred _____

7. In your own opinion, to what extent does the prevocational subjects chosen by the learners relate to their vocational interests. (Please tick)

To a large extent [] To less extent [] To no extent []

8. If you answer to No. 7 above is that of less extent, please suggest reasons for that state of things.

9. (a) Are you aware of a prevocational subject(s) for which the students have vocational interest in but it is (are) not provided in your school?

Yes [] Not aware []

(b) If the answer above is yes, which subject(s)? _____

(c) What are the main probable reasons for the school inability to provide the subject(s)? _____

10. In your opinion, given the students academic performance most students who are taking prevocational subjects are likely to fit in.

Post secondary path	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure
Self employment					
Salaried employment					
Further vocation training					
Further education in the university					

QUESTIONNAIRE- FOR THE STUDENTS

The information provided will be used only for research work on prevocational curriculum for vocational aspiration of secondary school students and will be treated with confidence.

Please respond to all items.

SECTION A: Background Information of Respondent

1. a) Name/ Adm. No _____ form _____
- b) Gender Male [] Female []
- c) Age 14 -15 [] 16-17 [] 18 and above []
2. Have you decided on a career path?
- Yes [] Not decided [] I have not made clear decision []

SECTION B

3. (a) Which career do you aspire to? _____
- (b) Give a reason for your choice.
- I like to be self employed []
- I like to be in salaried employment []
- Any other reason (*specify*) _____
4. (a) Which of the following Prevocational (practical/ applied) subject do you take?
- (Please tick)
- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Agriculture | [] | Drawing and Design | [] |
| Art and Design | [] | Electricity | [] |
| Business studies | [] | Home science | [] |
| Building and construction | [] | Metal work | [] |
| Computer studies | [] | Wood work | [] |
| Aviation | [] | Power mechanics | [] |

b) Did you choose the prevocational subject you are taking? (*Please tick*)

Yes [] No []

c) If yes, explain why you choose the subject you are taking?

(*You can tick more than once*)

Easy to pass []

Easy to apply at home []

As a hobby []

I can use the skills for self employment []

I can get salaried employment []

Useful in pursuit or further education []

d) If you did not choose the prevocational subject you are taking, what circumstances led you to it? (*Tick appropriately.*)

i. There was no other subject to choose from []

ii. It was tied to another subject that I like []

iii. Any other circumstance (please specify) _____

5. Suppose all the following subjects are taught in your school. In which order would you choose them? Please indicate in the box the one you would choose first, second, third and so on up to the eleventh.

Agriculture []

Art and Design []

Aviation []

Building construction []

Computer studies []

Electricity []

Home science []

Metal work []

Wood work []

Business studies []

Power mechanics []

6. Does the prevocational subject you are taking match with your career aspiration?

Yes [] No []

7. (a) What are the chances that you will use the skills from prevocational subject you are currently taking? (*Please tick*)

Very high [] High [] Low [] Very low []

(b) Please explain your answer in 7 (a) above.

APPENDIX 2: WORK PLAN

Main activities	Time (months)
Proposal writing and submission	4 months
Pre-testing (piloting)	3 weeks
Field survey – data collection	1 months
Data processing	3 weeks
Report writing and submission	1 ½ months

APPENDIX 3: BUDGET

Item	Cost
Proposal writing	
Stationary	3,000
Drafts	1,000
Printing	3,000
Developing 3 copies @ 200	600
Binding 3 copies @100	300
Traveling	4,000
Cost of research project	
Travelling	10,000
Questionnaire development	1,000
Data analysis	3,000
Printing	3,000
Photocopies of 4 copies @300	1,200
Binding of 4 copies @ 300	900
Miscellaneous expenses	5,000
Contingency	5,000
Total	41,000

APPENDIX 4: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

APPENDIX 5: RESEARCH PERMIT