

Abstract

This study aimed at exploring gender-related challenges faced by students in learning technical courses in Machakos Technical Training Institute (MTTI). The objectives of the study were to identify the courses male and female students were taking in MTTI, investigate gender-related challenges students faced in learning technical courses in MTTI and suggest ways of addressing these challenges. The study was guided by descriptive research. Nine departments in the institution were grouped into three clusters for the purpose of the study. One female, two male administrators and four heads of the departments were included as informants. Systematic sampling was used to select a sample of teachers while simple random sampling was used to select a students' sample. In total, 18 teachers, 207 male and 190 female students participated in the study. Data were collected using interview schedules for the administrators, heads of departments and teachers while a questionnaire was used to obtain data from students. Quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences while qualitative data was presented through descriptive methodology. The study established that male and female students faced challenges from teachers and classmates in learning various courses. In particular, male students dominated courses hitherto considered masculine such as Building and Civil Engineering (BCE), Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE) and Computing and Applied Sciences (CAS) that were considered unsuitable for females. Female students in turn dominated mainly in Hospitality Management and Clothing Technology traditionally considered feminine. The study recommends the development of gender responsive policies to empower students to participate equally in learning technical courses and a positive transformation in teachers and students' attitudes and beliefs towards all courses with competence.