

ABSTRACT

Studies worldwide have revealed that principals of Technical Training Institutes use different strategies to enhance students' access, retention and qualities of education. In some TTIs, the strategies yielded the desired outcomes while in some cases the desired outcomes have not been realized, amid challenges. Statistics from Nairobi County indicate an enrolment decline from 8643 to 6331 in 2010-2014, a 26.75% enrolment drop; while nationally, an enrolment decline of 2.62% over the same period was recorded. The national pass rate for TTI graduates declined from 44349 to 31089 in 2010-2014, a 29.9% drop while in Nairobi County the pass rate dropped from 7683 to 4934 in 2010-2014 a 35.8% drop and an indicator of declining quality of education in TTIs. The purpose of this study was to establish the strategies used and challenges for principals in enhancing access, retention and quality education in TTIs in Nairobi County. Objectives of the study were to; establish strategies and challenges faced by principals in enhancing access; establish strategies and challenges used for principals in retaining students and establish strategies and challenges used for principals in enhancing quality of education. A conceptual framework showing strategies and challenges as independent variables and; access, retention and quality of education as dependent variables was used. Descriptive research design was adopted. Target population was 437. A sample size of 239 respondents (3 Principals, 23 HoDs, 191 lecturers and 22 Student Council Members) were selected through saturated and random sampling techniques. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect data. Reliability coefficients of research instruments for Student Council Members was 0.78, HODs 0.81 and lecturers 0.74 at set p-value of .05. Validity of instruments was determined by experts in educational administration. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and means while qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed in emergent themes and sub themes. The study established that use of former and on-going students was high with a mean ratings of 4.2 and 3.5 respectively. Frequency of students' enrolment termly 3.9 and advertisement at secondary schools 4.0 enhanced access. Orientation during admission 3.2, financial assistance to students' 4.7, teaching-learning resources 4.6 and affordable fees 4.8 enhanced retention. Employment skills 4.5, benchmarking 4.0, pass rate 4.5, teacher class attendance 4.8, laboratory equipment 4.1, textbooks 4.5, optimal use of facilities 3.9 enhanced quality of education. Challenges faced in enhancement of access, retention and quality of education included communication 4.3, orientation 3.5, placement services 4.0 and affordability of accommodation 4.5. The study concluded that principals used a number of strategies in enhancing students' access, retention and improvement of quality education and in the process faced some challenges. The study recommended that stakeholders be more involved in technical education so as to achieve desired goals. The findings are significant in providing information to TTIs' stakeholders on strategies used and challenges faced by principals in enhancing access, retention and quality education for purposes of policy review, formulation and implementation.