

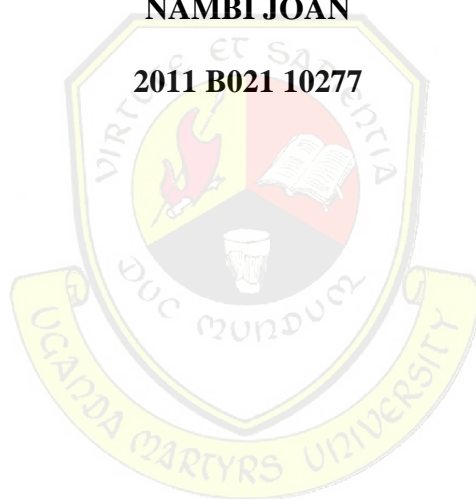
**ROLE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN IMPROVING EMPLOYEE  
PERFORMANCE**

**A CASE STUDY OF NAKAWA VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE**

**BY:**

**NAMBI JOAN**

**2011 B021 10277**



**UGANDA MARTYRS UNIVERSITY**

**AUGUST 2014.**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT OF  
UGANDA MARTYRS UNIVERSITY**

**AUGUST 2014.**

## **DEDICATION**

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my beloved family for their motivation, my parents and my supervisor for the guidance he has accorded me. Above all I do thank almighty God for his love and grace.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to thank God Almighty for having seen me through three years of this part of my academic journey; I am humbled and grateful for His grace and love. Secondly, I would like to thank my loving parents, Mr and Mrs Kambugu for supporting me, mentoring me, encouraging and guiding me but most of all loving me unconditionally, May the good Lord continue to bless you.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BTVET- Business Technical and Vocational Training

CEDEFOP-European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

ILO- International Labour Organisation

TVET- Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

VET- Vocational Education and Training

YMCA-Young Men's Christian Association

## ABSTRACT

The study aimed at assessing the role of vocational training on employee performance in different organisations, case study being Nakawa Vocational Institute in Kampala concentrating solely on individuals who underwent training in that institute in their different organisations. The study was mainly looking at vocational training and the skills and techniques acquired and how these skills helped individuals to explore all their potential and capabilities in a way that made them perform significantly better than all those individuals who did not obtain this training.

The researcher used a cross sectional research design with both qualitative and quantitative methods with a population study of 320 people out of which a sample size of 158 employees and employers of Coca Cola, Kakira Sugar Works and Nile Breweries who went through Nakawa was chosen. Using simple random sampling, respondents were chosen from the different organisations and these had all undergone vocational training. Both questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data from the selected respondents. Both the primary and secondary data were used during collection of data. Data was collected by use of questioners, interview guides and observation methods and analysed in form of tables, graphs and pie charts.

The findings revealed that vocational training contributes positively towards improving employees' performance. It was discovered that the training offered to individuals enables them to increase creativity, become more innovative work faster and be efficient. Specialisation helps them to master all there is to a job while apprenticeship gives workers a hands on experience to what the job requires which enables them to transition faster and fit in and do as required and expected of them. It was also discovered that the skills acquired have to be utilised appropriately to be effective and this includes matching the skills to the job, favourable conditions and proper supervision. However despite all the positive outcomes of vocational training, individuals who have undergone this training still face several challenges that still continue to pose threats to employees' performance.

Organisations should emphasise their labour market needs and make it easier for individuals to attain training in areas that they can be useful. Also there is a need for organisations to ensure that they accommodate these employees well, encourage their skill use, provide proper working conditions and rewards to boost the growth of the number of individuals who underwent training in most companies.

It was also discovered that there is a need to further look into the process of choosing the right vocational training for each individual and getting into a course that best suits them. Furthermore, the challenges individuals encounter when transitioning from the old technology studied in the institution to the new technology adopted by most of the companies today. These are some of the areas to be considered for further study.

# CHAPTER ONE

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

Throughout the world, and in particular the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, governments are renewing efforts to promote with the belief that skill formation enhances productivity and sustains competitiveness in the global economy.

Vocational education is the acquisition of specific skills for self-employment or career skills for example cookery, dressmaking, carpentry, masonry as well as working in the industries. This type of education is offered to meet needs of individuals and society as well. The ability of individuals are utilized to the fullest (Tum1996) .Vocational education is one of the national development strategies in many societies. It creates a great impact on human resource development, productivity and economic growth (Van Ark (1992).

This study aimed to evaluate the role of vocational training on improving employee performance in different organisations, businesses and enterprises in Uganda as well as the competitive advantage they acquire by having employees who have gone through vocational training.

This research work is composed of five chapters and this current chapter,the general introduction addressed a number of issues such as the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, hypothesis, scope of the study, significance, justification of the study, finally the conceptual frame work and definition of key terms.

## **1.1 Background to the Study**

Worldwide, governments are renewing efforts to promote vocational education, in the belief that skills formation enhances productivity and sustains competitiveness in the global economy (Atchoarena, 2004). In the wake of public sectors reforms, many governments have decided to reshape vocational education institutions in order to make them more efficient and effective. It is a widely recognized fact that, technical and vocational education can play an important role in supporting social and economic development goals in the sense that it helps keep less endowed or highly intelligent youths unable to be absorbed by university and college education off the streets and provides employers with skilled workers and technicians (Gill and Fluitman, 2003)

Globally, almost fifty million students were enrolled in technical and vocational education in 2002 (Gill and Fluitman, 2003). The global average is that 1 in 5 post-secondary students are enrolled in technical and vocational programmes (UNESCO, 2005). However, the enrolment rates vary widely by region. In Europe and East such programmes account for 50% and 33% respectively of post-secondary enrolment. In other regions, technical and vocational enrolment is more common. In Africa and South America, for example, the share is labour 20% and North America and West Asia, less than 10% and 4% respectively (UNESCO 2005).

All over the world, vocational training and education has been embraced in different ways. In some countries it has realised a faster growth rate than others like Czech Republic with 84% enrolment, South Africa with 1%, Zambia 8% this shows that vocational training is a growing concern around the world.

The history of formal vocational skills training in Uganda dates way back in the colonial period especially the late 1940s when the World War II former camps were converted into

skills training centres to retrain demobilised soldiers as well as younger children to acquire skills for survival. This continued with enacting a legislation to prevent exploitation of young children and so this led to the establishment of the apprenticeship legislation in 1949. All these were ways of formalising and integrating education into the Ugandan system.

Vocational training was introduced in Uganda after independence in 1963. The government of Uganda took initiative to ensure that this project developed. In 1967, the government of Japan offered the Ugandan government the building of a modern vocational training institute at Nakawa to increase the production of craftsmen and women and retraining people to meet industrial needs. In 1968, the government came up with a strategy of strengthening the industrial vocational training schemes. The idea solidified in 1972 when the employment act was repealed and the industrial training decree and the industrial training regulations were promulgated. This made apprenticeship training more prominent than ever before especially for manufacturing, repair industries and organisations. The Ugandan government inherited schools operated by the Ministry of Education and Sports, for students who completed primary education and the curriculum. This training is broad in the first year with subsequent specialisation during the second and third years. Apprenticeship scheme was designed to follow the school based training. (Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda BTVET portal accessed online 12/05/2014)

In 1968, the government came up with a strategy of strengthening the industrial vocational training schemes. The idea did not take off until 1972, when the Employment Act was repealed and the Industrial Training Decree No. 2 of 1972 together with the Industrial Apprenticeship Training Regulations was promulgated. This made apprenticeship training more prominent than ever before especially among the manufacturing, repair industries and organizations.

High dropout rates at every level necessitate greater emphasis on vocational education to train school-leavers' for available jobs within Uganda's economy. Moreover, Uganda's industrial sector is small, compounding problems of absorption of dropouts. The Ministry of Education recognizes this problem and has revamped secondary school curriculums to reflect the need for more training in arts and crafts and vocational subjects such as woodworking and agriculture.

### **1.1.1 Background of the Case Study**

The Nakawa Vocational Institute in Kampala offers full-time courses in auto mechanics, electrical installation and fitting, and industrial engineering. A 16 year old secondary school dropout who has completed at least two years of secondary school can take six month training courses in metal working, sheet metalwork, welding, and flame cutting. Both theory and practice are taught.

There are YMCAs and YWCAs throughout Uganda which offer vocational training programs in handicrafts, cooking, health education, dressmaking, typing, business correspondence, bookkeeping, carpentry and joining, masonry, plumbing, and driving. Makerere University's Continuing Education Centre also offers vocational training courses by "taking the university to the people." These are one-year full-time residence courses leading to university certificates in adult studies. It also offers courses for clerks, teachers, chiefs, artisans, and agricultural extension workers. There are 10 rural technical schools offering three year courses and five two-year technical training institutes.

Nakawa Vocational Training Institute is one of the four vocational public institutions operated under the ministry of education and sports. It was established in 1971 by the government of Uganda in cooperation with the government of Japan. The primary objective



of the establishment was to provide vocational training skills to school leavers and apprentices in enterprises and to upgrade and assess competences of industrial workers.

Nakawa vocational training institute covers eight major areas that are taught and these include electricity, wood work, mechanics, machining and fitting, brick and concrete practice and so many others. The courses are undertaken in four basic ways; basic training which is a two year course done full day, advanced training which is a one year course and upgrade training to improve on already acquired skills and this takes from 1-6 weeks. The institution success rates are high and this has developed very strong links with organisations such as Nile Breweries, Kakira Sugar Works, Uganda Breweries, Coca Cola and so on who recruit trainees from the institute directly into the company as employees. These employees in the various companies will be used as sample to determine the impact vocational training done in Nakawa has on employee performance of the various employees in Nile Breweries, Kakira Sugar Works and Coca Cola.

Many organisations enrol individuals they believe are competent to do the required work, be innovative, make positive changes and in general be productive but this is not the case 100 per cent of the time, therefore there was need to find out how these employees performance can be improved in a way that is mutually beneficial to the company or organisation as well as the employees.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Walter (1964) asserts that vocational training aims at equipping individuals with lifelong skills that they can use in their various professions. The system passes on knowledge and training that helps people achieve a variety of goals through developing specific skills, transmitting general work skills and encouraging socialisation at the work place. It is through

the training programs that individuals acquire the necessary skills that can improve work performance

According to Uganda Bureau of Statistics, (2006) Vocational gross enrolment in Uganda remains around 2% of the total high education sector. This indicates a low enrolment rate; implying that the system is inequitable and inefficient.

Despite the known benefits, employee performance in most organisations is not at 100% excellent and poor performance is still an issue. Furthermore, there is still a slow growth in numbers of people enrolling in vocational training and an even slower initiative from organisations to train their employees or take on new employees from vocational institutions as compared to the university graduates. Organisations prefer to use cheap unskilled labour as much as possible reducing the available vacancies that can be occupied by vocational education students.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to find out how vocational training impacted employee performance and whether employees who undertook this training performed better in their areas of specialisation than those who did not undergo this training. It sought to prove the effectiveness of vocational training on employee performance in a bid to increase the number of people who undergo this training to avoid challenges that come up/ arise due to lack of employee training.

### **1.3 General Objective**

To examine the impact of vocational training on employee performance in organisation.

## **1.4 Specific Objectives**

1. To find out how training and skills assists towards improving employee performance in an organization.
2. To find effective ways vocational trainees can best put to use their skills to achieve maximum productivity.
3. To investigate why individuals who have undergone vocational training still face challenges in organisations.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

1. How does training and skills assist employee performance in an organization?
2. How can vocational trainees effectively use their skills to achieve maximum productivity?
3. Why do individuals who have undergone vocational training still face challenges in their different organisations?

## **1.6 Hypothesis**

Vocational training has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study investigated the impact of vocational training on improving performance of employees that was conducted in Nakawa Vocational Training Institute in Kampala.

### **1.7.1 Geographical Scope**

The geographical scope of the study was Nakawa Vocational Institute; which is located on Jinja Road, Nakawa, Uganda, Kampala. This study focused on individuals who underwent training at Nakawa Vocational institute but are now employed in different companies to date

and using the skills that they acquired in their different vocations to ensure better performance. The main group of concern for this research was the youth and how vocational training impacted their performance positively at their different places of employment.

### **1.7.2 Time Scope**

The study concentrated on a time period of five years beginning from 2007-2013.

### **1.7.3 Content Scope**

This investigation was conducted to determine the impact vocational training has on improving employee performance. The aspects looked into weretheways the different methods of learning used in vocational institutions like specialisation, training and apprenticeship provide individuals with the necessary skills and unique techniques that enhance employees' ability to be creative, innovative, faster and more efficient in their work hence improving performance. How individuals could best use their acquired skills to improve performance in different organisations to increase productivity. However, there was also need to understand why employees still face challenges at work despite having attained vocational training and possible solutions to that issue were discussed.

## **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The study helped employers especially to check their hiring policies and requirements for employment that they consider so as to increase on the general productivity of the entire employeebase and also was of great help to them in the reduction of wastage of available human resources.

It also showed how important vocational training is towards making the working experience of employees more fulfilling and rewarding.

The research provided some help to future researchers who want to find out more information on the topic above.

It also helped the researcher acquire better skills in carrying out research of an organisation.

### **1.9 Justification of the Study**

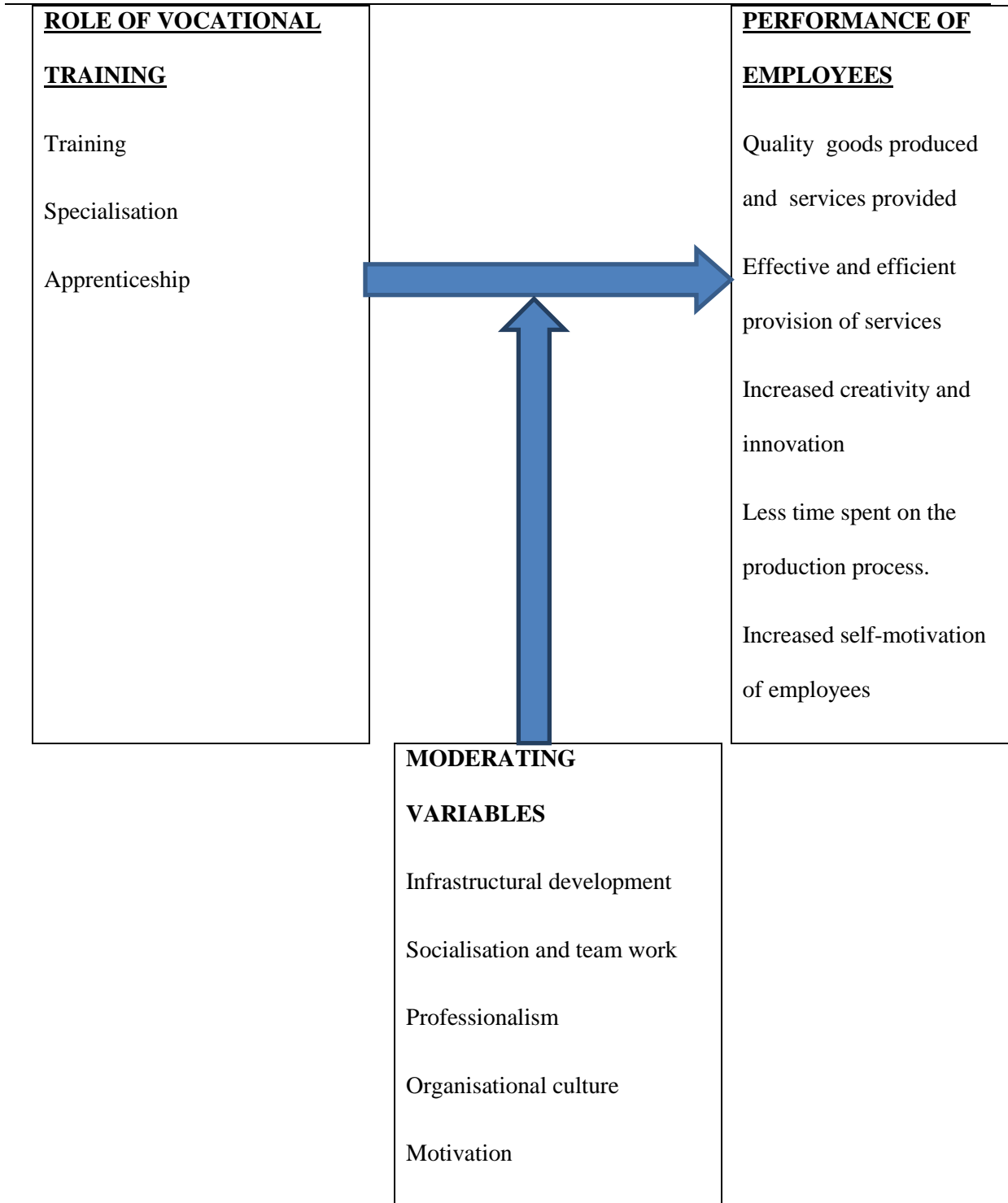
Employee training has been a big concern to different managements of organizations; the rate of employee turnover is also high in various organizations. Skill development has turned up to be a big issue in many organizations because of the need to be retained at work and also work with ease. Because of this urgency, the researcher was persuaded to go ahead to carry out research on the effect of vocational training on employee performance at Nile breweries, Kakira Sugar Works and coca cola concentrating on those employees who underwent training from Nakawa Vocational Institute so as to give recommendations on how the management of the companies on how they can improve employee performance through improving its reward management system.

## 1.10 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Independent variable

Dependent variable



Source: Researcher, 2014

### **1.10.1 Explanation of the conceptual framework is given below**

Figure 1 above illustrates a conceptual framework developed by the researcher from her objectives, it comprises of three variables that is, the independent variables, dependent variables and the moderating variables. The independent variable in this case is vocational training. The dependent variable is the performance of employees.

Vocational training provides and uses different modules of learning and passing on knowledge like training, on job practice, specialisation and apprenticeship through which great skills are passed and taught to individuals. By undergoing this program, individuals boost creativity, motivation, professionalism, socialisation skills which results in all round work excellence. Such positive differences increase productivity, reduce wastages through accidents, reduces time an individual spends on a given process showing that this training improves an employee's performance.

It is through vocational training that employees gain unique skills that enable them to improve performance at work. The training they receive enables them to understand what the job requires and what is supposed to be done.

Apprenticeship is a method where an individual is taught the aspects of the job by actively learning on the job itself. The employee participates and learns what a particular job requires. Apprenticeship helps an individual to get acquainted with the way the job Works and this helps an individual to easily adapt and do the job well.

Through specialisation, people master the skills a particular job requires and so become experts at that particular job which makes it easy to execute and so improving performance significantly. The conceptual frame work above clearly shows how specialisation, training and apprenticeship done in vocational training improve an employee's performance.

Employees also have to find creative ways to fully utilise their skills to achieve maximum productivity. By being creative, innovative and inventive they can do work faster and realise more returns in their places of work. The acquired skills have to be continuously put to use and practice to remain effective and productive.

However although vocational training provides so many skills and techniques to employees there are still challenges that have persisted and affected employees ability to be completely perfect in terms of their ability to do what is right, in the right time and order. There have been some persistent challenges that affect all employees including those that have undergone vocational training like technological changes, obsolescence of skills, personality differences etc and so affected employees performance negatively.

### **1.11 Definition of Key Terms**

**Performance:** It means degree of accomplishing tasks assigned to employees bearing in mind the quality, time management and efficiency Kootzetal (1990).

**Employee performance** refers to the efficiency and effectiveness of employees in achieving organizational objectives (Kootzetal1990).

**Training**– systematic development of the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for a person to be able to perform adequately a job or a task whose demands can be reasonably well identified in advance.

**Vocational training** -is education that aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and or competences required in specific occupations and labour markets CEDEFOP (2008).



**Apprenticeship**- is a practical system which combines training with periods of school based education to acquire competitiveness and knowledge of the theoretical aspects of a given trade Conford (2005).

### **1.12 Conclusion**

This chapter was the introductory chapter on which the rest of the research was based. The chapter split out the background of the study, problem statement, objectives, research questions, scope of the study, justification, significance and the conceptual framework. All these helped the researcher to build the literature review.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

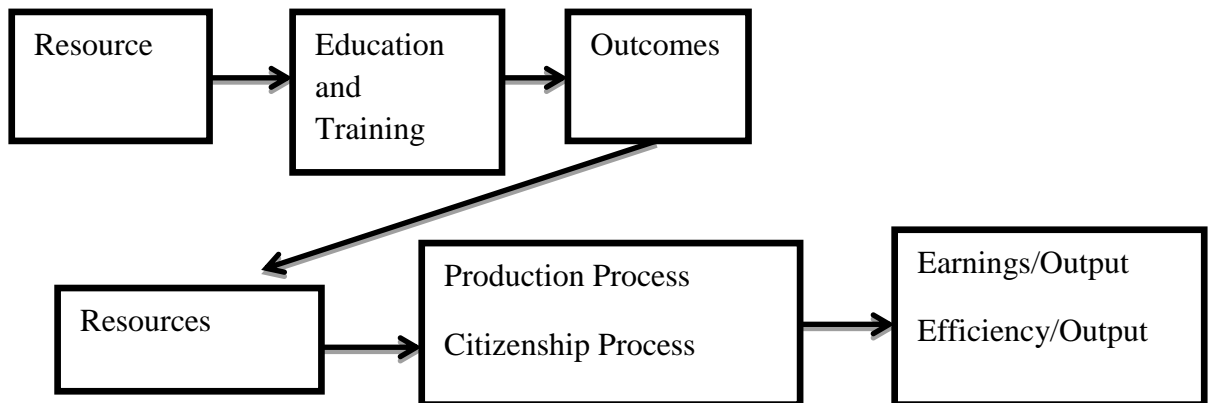
#### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher analysed the existing literature on vocational training and employee performance in organization. Information from text books, secondary data and internet sources was used so as to enrich this chapter.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

Human Capital theory has been proposed by Schultz (1961) and developed extensively by Becker (1964). The human capital theory suggests that education or training raises the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills, hence raising workers' future income by increasing their lifetime earnings (Becker, 1994). The human capital model suggests that an individual's decision to invest in training is based upon an examination of the net present value of the costs and benefits of such an investment. Individuals are assumed to invest in training during an initial period and receive returns to the investment in subsequent periods. Workers pay for training by receiving a wage which is lower than what could be received elsewhere while being trained. Since training is thought to make workers more productive, workers collect the returns from their investment in later periods through higher marginal products and higher wages. Human capital models usually decompose training into specific training, which increases productivity in only one firm, and general training, which increases productivity in more than one firm. Purely general training is financed by workers, and the workers receive all of the returns to this training. In contrast, employees and employers will share in the costs and returns of specific training. Despite these differences between general and specific training, the model predicts that both forms of training lower the starting wage and increase wage growth.

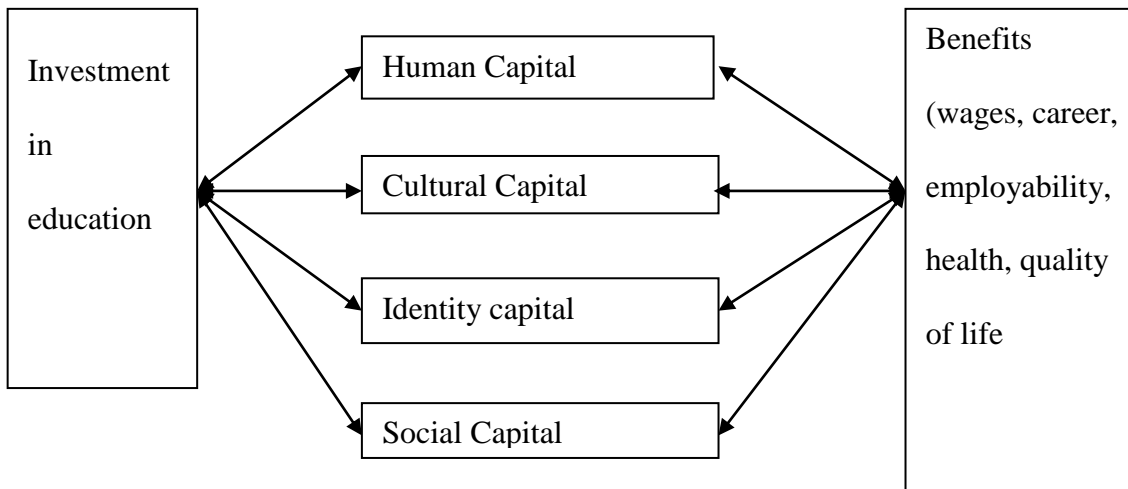
**Figure 2 Human Capital Modal**



**Source:** Becker (1994)

Basing on the view of other researchers, education and training affects four types of personal capital: human, social and cultural identity capital (Côté, 2005; Desjardin, 2008; Feinstein et al 2009). Human capital is the most widely known. It is seen as a combination and stock of knowledge, skills and competences a person has, which affect readiness to perform, productivity of labour all of which can be developed by education and training. With human capital, there is a possibility that it can depreciate when knowledge, skills and competences become obsolete, for example due to technological development and advancement (Becker, 1964; Hartog and Oosterbeek, 2007; OECD, 2010a).

**Figure 3 Developing capital to produce benefits**



*Source McMahon, 2004*

The above table demonstrates that if education is invested in maximally alongside elements like human capital, good social settings and conditions it results in numerous benefits like increased productivity, increased wages for employees and most importantly better quality of life for individuals involved. This is the basis of the study because vocational training being a form of education looks at how the programme provides individuals with skills and techniques necessary to make them stand out in their different places of work by being productive, innovative, creative which improves their performance to be able to advance their careers, get better wages and job security.

## **2.2 Overview of Vocational Training**

Most organizations invest in training to improve their performance (Alliger et al. 1997; Kozlowski et al., 2000) and decisions on how much to invest are partly determined by concerns about costs relative to benefits. Economic theory emphasizes private market benefits for organizations, for example higher productivity from trained workers. This logic argues that investment in generic training carries a greater risk of being lost because workers will leave, taking their new skills to obtain higher wages elsewhere.

Consequently, employers should offer and pay for specific training that increases worker productivity only in the organization. Economic theory simplifies matters however. People leave organizations for many reasons, not just wages and it overlooks the importance of stable employment relationships.

Vocational Training is carried out in various ways. Some of the types are explained below; Regulated vocational training is a form of initial vocational training provided under the education system, aimed at students with no previous work experience. Prieto (1994) states clearly and precisely that the objective of regulated vocational training should be to equip trainees to perform a job of work through acquisition of the necessary competences in the form of knowledge, social and technical skills; Occupational training designed to equip workers, employed or unemployed, for a given occupation or job by means of shorter or longer courses with a marked practical emphasis; Lastly there is continuing training, which is for workers employed in the public sector at central, autonomous community or local level and for those employed in private firms.

McMahon classifies the wide range of benefits of education (McMahon, 2004) and lifelong learning (McMahon, 1998), into two types; market and non-market benefits, both of which can be either private or external.

He goes on to say that private market benefits are delivered through the labour market. These benefits are enjoyed by the individuals directly to be specific workers and employees involved although they are not provided directly by the labour market and therefore are majorly influenced by every individuals working environment. They include longer lives, more satisfying leisure time and more time for parenting.

External market benefits are often indirect results of economic activity by organizations. For example, a better educated workforce can make organizations more innovative through

developing new technologies or adopting them more rapidly, but it can also lead to faster GDP growth nationally McMahon (2004). By undergoing proper training or going through a proper education system, people are able to improve on their skills and techniques, earn new things all which contribute towards getting more satisfying jobs, being happier and so living a longer happy life. This is what vocational training aims to do, to improve all aspects of an individual's work life.

External non-market benefits are generally found at societal level and are 'public' as an individual enjoying such benefits does not decrease their availability to others. Examples are greater civic responsibility which can lead to stronger and more stable democracies. Externalities can be static, such as a one-off increase in output due to a rise in the average level of education, or dynamic where, for example, greater innovation due to a rise in the average level of education raises the general growth rate. Evidence indicates that dynamic externalities are more important, but it is not yet conclusive.

Externalities mean that the total benefits accruing to a society are greater than the sum of the benefits accruing to individuals. For example, if someone engages less in criminal activity, society as a whole benefits. However, not all externalities are positive. For example higher investment in children's education is linked to low fertility which, coupled with increased longevity, may lead to an older population and increased pressure on health and welfare services. Both market and non-market benefits of education and training accrue to individuals, enterprises and groups and to society as a whole.

Delivery of VET is also more varied. VET can be initial or continuing, formal or informal, classroom- or workplace-based or both.

Vocational training focuses and uses three major methods to educate individuals enrolled under this program and these are training, specialisation and apprenticeship. These methods

will be discussed in detail below stating their various contributions and impact on employee performance.

### **2.2.1 Training and Employee Performance**

According to Conford (2005) vocational training is designed to prepare individuals for a vocation or specialised occupation. When placed in the right vocation, employees are guaranteed high chances of good performance which is directly linked with an organisations productivity and competitiveness. Vocational training has two categories, initial vocational training and continuous vocational training. Initial vocational training and education is undertaken beforehand as preparation for a particular profession or job field. Continuous vocational training and education on the other hand is a maintenance measure undertaken after entry into the working life and aims to help people to improve or update their knowledge or skills.

Continuous vocational training which is mainly sponsored by the firm is perceived as one that is most important to gain and maintain productivity. Although it is not clear whether the firm's major aim is to solely increase productivity, this training can also be used by the firm as a 'sorting' technique to determine which employees get promoted basing on their ability to take on the training and adjust accordingly. This scheme according to Zwich (2002) is a form of investment in the organisations employees. In other cases the training is used to increase flexibility in cases where workers tend to have redundant cognitions since some of their skills are not used daily and are subject to depreciation. Therefore with the different training offered to employees they are able to learn how to utilise all their skills simultaneously or as required and keep them relevant and useful. The technique of balancing skills contributes to employees speed, creativity and innovation which are all indicators of improved performance.

Vocational training involves teaching employees skills that can help them become more efficient and productive workers. Most careers include some type of on-the-job training, and a trained work force has benefits for employees and employers. Thomas (1997) discussed that training is often conducted to familiarize new employees with the roles and responsibilities of their positions as well as company policies. Many companies offer continuing training opportunities for employees, focusing on skills that can improve efficiency. Employees who are well trained often have higher motivation and morale because they feel that the company has invested in their ability and development. The belief that the organization has hope in them to be productive acts as a motivation for the employees to actually do their best and prove their worth which results in their increased participation, reduced time wastage, team work and so on which join together to arrive at improved all round performance for employees. ,m.

The training offered in vocational institutions provides all employees with a great sense of responsibility and professionalism. Armstrong (2000) contends that trained employees often work better as teams because everyone is aware of the expectations and can achieve them together smoothly. Trained employees are also more confident in their performance and decision-making skills. In addition, employees who receive regular training are more likely to accept change and come up with new ideas. Employees who learn new skills through training make good candidates for promotions because they have shown their ability to learn, retain and use information. Reliable, skilled employees can also be empowered to train other employees, the fact that reduces pressure for the management team. Employees who fit well in teams and can work well without constant supervision are ideal to employers because they do what is expected of them regardless of whether they are being watched or not. Conjoined effort with equally skilled members results in positive effects such as reduced lead time. Reduced wastage of materials, increased quality and so on which all indicate good



performance. Such performance by employees is desirable which makes individuals who have undergone training more appealing as compared to those who have no training.

Walter (1964) defines vocational training as education for the working world meant to help individuals make a living in terms of acquiring the right job and reaping all the benefits possible. He goes on to say that there is an increasing demand for trained and skilled workmen in the economic world in general and so vocational training is a wise investment for the nation as a whole. Every occupation requires some degree of preparation before the tasks involved can be carried out with skill and competence and the skills in our modern day are more sophisticated and the training methods more formal as compared to the primitive times where people just passed on ideas from generation to generation. Technology has evolved a lot over the years and with this evolution has come higher educational requirements not only for professionals but also those employed in supporting roles like the trainers whose work load has increased as more individuals attempt to improve their skills to enter that labour market, increase their levels of skills by becoming jerks of all trades to ascertain their job security. The amount of preparation now needed for employment has increased at all occupational levels and as our society becomes more complex the demands upon all workers become greater and as soon as employees enter the working world they quickly realise that they are constantly faced with the challenge to keep updated and current with the technology to be efficient and effective. The researcher agrees with Walters's notion that vocational training is a wise investment because it provides the necessary skills and techniques an employee would need to thrive in an organisation and so increase on productivity and eventually impact the economy as a whole. It is through vocational training that an individual can acquire exact and relevant skills to suit their area of expertise and use them in their working experience.

Vocational training is a system that prepares individuals for categories of jobs and families of occupations rather than focusing on single jobs or tasks and this education is there to embrace the fundamental purpose of education which is to provide opportunities and enable an individual have choices to choose from according to Gordon (1978). With choices and opportunities comes freedom of mobility for an employee and once an employee has this option they are more valuable and irreplaceable as compared to those who do not. Job security is highly sought after by all employees and it is one of the many benefits of vocational training and it encourages creativity of an individual, innovation as well as openness of communication as long as an employee feels safe they put one hundred and ten percent of effort into their job which is easily noticed by the employer.

Vocational education provides and avails an individual employee with the options and it is these options that make them more valuable than other untrained workers with no alternatives, vocational graduates for this matter get jobs quicker, earn security, higher accumulated earnings and have experience as well as knowledge of what to do in the organisation. The approach in this case is different in terms of what an ideal vocational education should be about but the standing is the same in terms of all the benefits that come with vocational training for an employee. The pre training secures options for an employee and they are able to determine their own their fate since vocational education unlike general education concentrates on the skills needed to survive in the field of choice and capitalises on them so eventually with training, apprenticeship and specialisation an individual is more competent than any other employee who has no level of training. The confidence that this training provides makes an employee better, they are able to work to their full potential and still know they have an option to move if and when conditions deem it necessary. Employees therefore end up performing tremendously well in an area they are trained for and know completely so are faster and more productive which indicates that they perform well.

Addison (1994) looks at vocational education as an overall solution to all the problems an economy has and that this training is done to meet and approach a range of policy objectives and is seen as an essential element in increasing the competitiveness of the economy by improving the skills of the individuals already in the market as well as providing back up from the younger generation to replace those already in the field. They believe that for this education system to be effective, it has to apply to all people from all walks of life and can then be beneficial to all regardless as to whether they are women, men or re-entrant as these people have potential to alter the state of the economy if they work hand in hand towards a general goal. These scholars look at vocational education as a solution to improving the competitive advantage of Europe to other continents by capitalising on the benefits that come from partaking and involving the population in this training. The benefits of vocational training like creativity, innovation, time saving as a result of doing work much faster all contribute towards an employee's individual performance and so investing in this training provides a platform for more employees to perform better and contribute towards the growth of the organization.

In today's labour demand, there is a shortage of people with the required education to fill the labour demand. Young people chose education paths based on the current demand and labour market situation or concentrate on the marketable courses. However, later on after completing their education they find that the situation has changed seeing as the education system is long and exhaustive. Therefore some forms of vocational training in particular apprenticeship and continuous training help to avoid such mismatches because training is directly related to particular firm's needs and gaps that it has in its human resource department so they train and mentor people in hope of having them fill specific positions that are needed Barro and Sala-i-Martin (1995).

Vocational training is linked with human resource practices and performance because training of employees mobilises feelings of loyalty and belonging among employees. This can be seen as a gift exchange between employers and employees. Employees take into high regard consideration for training seeing it as a form of investment made on them. This prompts them to react by giving higher commitment at work, acting in the interest of the organisation they work for their initiative and that they perform outside their expectations. Training in itself being perceived as a gift triggers commitment and dedication which improves performance automatically.

In addition, vocational training can be linked with micro benefits on the social level. This training does not only benefit employees concerning their employment and careers but also fosters personal development, better attitude and motivation. This comes from confidence associated with talent, experience and expertise. Employees are conversant with the work they do, enjoy work and in the end becomes beneficial to all parties involved. The vocational training programmes allow individuals to get acquainted at an early stage with the work field as they concentrate on that they have the most interest in. This fosters personal motivation when people are able to make a living on what they are best at rather than what they were trained to become, (Cedefop 2011).

However despite all the existing information and arguments carried out by different researchers on the advantages of vocational training many people in Uganda especially have not embraced this form of education and it is still on small scale basis. Therefore there is a need to highlight all the possible advantages and encourage more people to get this training and improve their performance and productivity.

In conclusion, training offered in vocational institutes helps employees to gain a competitive edge from increased skill to professionalism and all round confidence and this has

contributed greatly towards improving their performance. Although this training can only be completely effective when an individual has retaining power, will and spirit to work as well as given natural talent to carry out the different tasks. There are still no standard criteria for people that can receive this training and most cases not all those who are trained can offer the same positive benefits since it is internalised by the individual and only them have control organisations have no control on the human mind and so it is not a definite guarantee that individuals who have received this training will perform better than those who have not undergone this training.

### **2.2.2 Specialization and Employee Performance**

Specialization of labor is the two-edged sword of job design. On one hand, specialization has made possible high-speed, low-cost production, and from a materialistic standpoint, it has greatly enhanced our standard of living. On the other hand, extreme specialization (as we see in mass-production industries) often has serious adverse effects on workers, which in turn are passed on to management. In essence, the problem is to determine how much specialization is enough.

Specialization has numerous advantages to both the employee and the employer; to the employee it encourages routine that leads to perfection since an individual concentrates on an area of strength and perfects it; to the employer it eases recruitment process of employees, leads to higher output and productivity which are all positive benefits and impacts of specialization.

In addition, McMahon (1988) believes and supports that vocational training to be effective and of good use should deal in a specific vocation or field and not for a specific employer. The aim in this case is to master all there is in ones field of interest by getting both general and specific training but not with the employer in mind because their requirements might not

involve the field as a whole. A perfect vocational training and education is a meet between the general education principles which embodies many productive skills like literacy, numeracy, creativity and the technical and practical part of the training. For this education to be effective, it is necessary to be done at every stage in one's career path starting from after school, in transition from job to job and even on job so that it is effective. Employees who undergo all this training beforehand turn out to have better starting salaries as compared to those who do not because the cost of on job training is eliminated by the employers which cost is directly sent back to them in form of big starting salary and prompt and sufficient salaries are one of the greatest motivators of workers today making it even easier for employers to eliminate extreme supervision. The benefits from vocational training should ideally outweigh the costs and for countries like Uganda, adopting vocational education is logical seeing as it is less costly since on job training that stalls production and causes delays is eliminated and guarantees efficient employees from the start and income meant for on job training can be out sourced or put to use in other departments of the organization. Mastering and getting to know all there is about a job can only result in better performance in terms of reduced wastage, reduced production time less costs on defects and so on because an employee knows exactly what to do, how to do it and when, this way they perform better as a result of specialising in one area.

Similarly it was discovered by Zinderman (1991) that those individuals who studied and undergone vocational training and gone ahead to be employed in the field they were trained in were earning over ten times more than those who received no training or had general education simply because their returns were more and higher, the key however to all this success was that these individuals are employed in a field they actually studied and can practice in. The employees were generally more cost effective as the returns on this investment were all realised and more. Israel as a country realised that vocational education is

more economically effective than any other type of education especially for non-rich countries which in this case Uganda is part of and hence making this applicable.

The main reason for the success of vocational students comes from the level of professionalism that they acquire and learn over the course of their study. Kliebard (1990) found that the vocational courses being short and precise, tend to compact all the necessities together to be learnt in a short period of about six months or so and so these students are engaged in both practical and theoretical studies and are given information which is passed on fully and so these students learn exactly what is necessary. The level of professionalism is high since concentration and emphasis is put on how an individual will be able to perform in the job field and it is this level of professionalism that secures most of these individuals' jobs and enables them to thrive and perform exceptionally. The reconciliation of traditional work ethics and the order in which work was done and carried out from the olden times and not necessarily letting new developments and technology affect the right way of carrying out work is another reason as to why individuals who have had some training are may be more effective and efficient than those employees with no training at all. The level of ethical maturity in vocational students is admirable and employers have recognized this value putting these students and employees at a better advantage than those who received a general education.

In conclusion specialisation enables individuals to fully grasp the concepts related to the job and its activities. An employee concentrates on the crucial parts of the job, masters them and perfects their execution in a way that is aimed at doing the job better than those people who have not received this training. Therefore speed increases, fewer defects are realised increased quality of produce among other things which indicates improved performance.

### **2.2.3 Apprenticeship and employee performance.**

Each type of apprenticeship is designed to provide the skills and experiences necessary to practice the occupation through further skills and qualifications. Apprenticeship programmes are monitored by a comprehensive quality control system that includes examinations and education, legal, administrative and political components. This program provides the employees with comprehensive training in the practical and theoretical aspects of the work required in a highly skilled occupation. It combines both on the job and classroom training to prepare employees for highly skilled jobs like laboratory technicians. This is considered as an on the job training program because they involve a substantial amount of on the job training and it is carried out during the on job training even though they do have some aspect of off the job training. Its purpose is to learn the practical skills of the job that is to say apprentices learn the practical theoretical side of their job in the classes they attend. Here the trainee follows a prescribed order of course work and hands on experience.

According to James 1995, the system of apprenticeship as used in Germany known as the dual system combined part time vocational school with apprenticeship in a firm. Apprentices are trained and certified in one of the 377 specific occupations. It required a three year commitment and training in a specific occupation. This created positions for employees by employers who chose among the applicants. Employers would provide instruction and training and in exchange receive increasingly productive labour at a lower rate.

In most cases apprenticeship is regulated by the department of labour which requires a minimum of 144 hrs of class room instruction each year as well as the on the job with a skilled employee and this program lasts from 2-5 years. There are a number of occupations to offer apprenticeship program and some of them include electricians, plumbers, operating engineers, mechanics and many others. The program develops employees who are open to



change, it helps the company to attract ambitious workers and lets the company tailor training and work experience to meet its specific needs.

Arne (1995) believe that vocational education is an effective way to create a skilled labour force and assist employees in their transition into the working world from university, high school or tertiary institutions. The vocational training and education system aims to achieve a variety of goals like developing specific skills, transmitting general work skills and encouraging employee socialisation. In most cases trainees that have gone through this system receive a package deal that has a number of techniques they are able to learn over the course of their training. Using the example of the duals system in Germany, where vocational training and an apprenticeship programme are adapted so that people undergoing this training can put all they know and learn into practice instead of leaving it all in theory. This dual system enhances these individuals subsequent career attainment because of the benefits the participants reap. The aim of this system is to put theory into practice where the students are trained and then monitored as they put to use what they have learnt and at the end of the course most of the theory has been applied and students can easily work on their own without so much as an instruction from the trainers. More so people who have completed this training are more eligible for further training and credentials that allow them to compete for lower and mid-level managerial positions. People that have undergone vocational training are able to resist the process of task routinisation, monotony and deskilling brought on by the constant changes in the economy. All these elements can work well together provided that the training is related directly to the job meaning that students and employees should train in a field they want to be employed in and not general training. Much of the success of the vocational training and employee performance relationship is attributed to job fit by knowing what to train for, and applying all the taught skills in a way that is productive and useful not only to oneself but mainly the organisation.

Stevens (2001) however contradicts and disagrees with the notion and suggestion that vocational training impacts employee performance positively. She suggests that instead vocational training for a firm is not necessary and is an expense because training does not guarantee performance or obtain a return from engaging its employees in vocational training. Furthermore starting the training process will increase on losses as those employees that will have undergone this training earlier will leave and seek employment elsewhere and other organisations and firms will just wait for one firm to train its workers then poach on them offering higher salaries increasing an individual firms losses immensely. Furthermore human capital or human resource cannot fundamentally be used as a security loan as it is unreliable and unpredictable in terms of what can happen to an individual. People can lose their lives, get ill, lose the skill with time so rather than lose the money or training workers where there is no guarantee of returns, Stevens suggests forfeiting the whole process of vocational training although individuals who personally take the initiative to train are more likely to be rewarded in terms of responsibility, salary and flexibility of working hours.

In conclusion vocational training has many pros and benefits that it comes with and the impact vocational training has on employees is generally positive because it improves an employee's skills both theoretical and technical, improves the level of professionalism, traditional ethical conduct and so forth all which contribute to improving an employee's personal performance as a whole.

From the above argument vocational training does not mean that automatically employees will improve in terms of job efficiency, time management, self-control and the likes but could instead mean unplanned unemployment, further budget cuts reducing and affecting salaries which do not contribute positively to employee performance and instead of impacting it positively. However to fully harness these benefits this education has to go hand in hand

with various factors for an employee's performance to significantly improve like conducive working conditions prompt wages and salaries.

Also with vocational training and education there has been a tendency to ignore the market imperfections and requirements. With the current economic situation employment is scarce which forces individuals who have undergone this training to take on jobs even in areas outside their training. Therefore regardless of the good training, their performance cannot be significantly better or improve because the skills acquired cannot be used to their maximum which might disregard the importance of vocational training on employee performance.

### **2.3 Ways employees can best use their skills to improve performance**

Vocational training programmes are designed to provide individuals with a numerous number of skills in the course of their training. They are expected to retain as much as possible and then apply it appropriately in their different fields of work with an aim of achieving maximum productivity. However for these skills to be productive and beneficial to all parties involved, there have to be some predetermined conditions available or in place.

Employee performance is majorly measured in terms of productivity; therefore first there is a need to understand productivity as a concept. According to the International Labour Organisation 2005, productivity is a relationship between inputs and outputs. Something is considered to be productive if the level of output increases with a less than proportionate increase in input or when the input is constant but output increases. Therefore to ensure that individuals who have undergone training best use their skills to become more productive, there are certain factors that can be used to ensure this.

First of all there needs to be a significant job fit between the individual and their job. Vocational training majorly focuses on offering training to individuals to match a specific job

so this aspect needs to be really concentrated upon. This is where the aspect of specialisation comes in to focus on one area and master it.

Person job fit focuses on the compatibility between an individual and the organisation in which he or she Works. The ideal situation is for every employee to work in an organisation that is a good match for them in the sense that they can relate to the organisational culture, the work values and pre-existing working conditions. This concept of job fit can be looked at in two different ways each explaining how an individual can be compatible or fit into a given organisation. These are the complementary fit and the supplementary fit. According to Sekiguchi (2003), a supplementary fit is a condition in which the characteristics of a person are similar to the environment of an organisation or with the people within the organisation this focuses on the compatibility of an employee with the environment of the organisation. The employee in this case fully agrees with the organisational culture, respects its values and therefore is passionate in the organisation in which they work.

Supplementary fit on the other hand, occurs when the characteristics of an individual fill up a gap or space in the organisation thus complementing the organisation and so making it complete Muchinsky (1987). For this case, the two that is the organisation and the employee complement each other, they are one entity and none is complete without the other. Vocational trainees mainly apply in this category because they are highly sought after mainly because they have the skill set needed by various organisations in particular areas that are critical to their growth and productivity. Therefore, for employees to be able to make use of all the skills acquired during training in a way that is both beneficial and economical, they need to be placed in an organisation they are fit for.

Job fit however continues to be a challenge for both employees and employers in Uganda today due to the harsh economic situations. Organisations today are focusing more on

attaining cheap labour rather than hiring qualified personnel simply because they are more costly in terms of wages. In turn people have become desperate for work and to earn a living they take on whatever employment is available regardless of whether it is the right for them or not to cope with the current economic situation. There is still need to clarify the impact of job fit on performance of employees in a way that is understandable to all levels of workers.

Furthermore for employees to best use their skills in a bid to improve performance, there is need to be placed and be part of a functional team. A team or work group according to Glueck (1974) is a set of people with whom an individual interacts in order to complete a task. Placing an individual into a productive team in more ways than one will make them more productive and so improve their performance. Similarity between group members in terms of values, goals and interpersonal skills will influence their performance either negatively or positively.

In a research carried out by Cohen and Ledford (1994), it was discovered that members when placed in a self-managing group had significantly better job performance and higher employee job satisfaction than traditional working groups. In cases where the teams were carefully selected and high ability workers were placed into teams that they could easily blend into and work with the performance improved in more ways than one including high levels of perceived discretion, job satisfaction and employment security as a whole in the given organisation where the research was carried out. Majorly team work gives employees a sense of empowerment through increasing the control they can exercise over their working environment. This increased control gives them a sense of increased commitment to the job and organisation leading to more satisfaction. Therefore for employees in various organisations there is need to create functional teams with different members whose skills can complement each other, fill in the necessary gaps as well as facilitate peer learning to generally improve each trainees job performance as a whole.

Job rotation is a well-known method to get employees to increase skill usage, learn new tricks and reduce monotony at work. Job rotation according to Metin and Thomas (1998) is a practice that involves assigning a worker to a series of tasks in the same job bracket along which an individual rotates with some frequency. In this practice, an individual is involved in all aspects of production and not just one area. It is literally the direct opposite of specialisation. Job rotation is carried out in a way that at each given time, a worker rotates around all the tasks involved in a production rather than specialise in a single task or unit. An electrical engineer can go from circuit design to fabrication to assembly. This way a worker is able to fully use all the skills they learnt and acquired in vocational training because each task requires a different level of skill and expertise. The constant change also provides practice for trainees, reduces monotony and prevents skill obsolescence which is a common occurrence that is related to specialisation.

For the skills acquired by individuals in vocational training to be effective increase productivity and therefore improve employee performance the skills have to be put to use in a way that will ensure results as discussed above. However perfect working conditions don't exist in every organisation and there are always some hindrances and shortages that hinder individuals to fully utilise their skills regardless of having received all the techniques from vocational training. Such cases of a situation that is ideally perfect do not exist and so there is need to bridge the gap between those idealistic ideas and reality that exists with problems.

#### **2.4. Why employees who have undergone vocational training still face challenges**

Vocational training is generally necessary for effective and efficient employee performance in many organizations in Uganda today simply because of the many benefits it has including improved skill among employees, reduced cycle time, increased motivation and job satisfaction among others. With these many benefits employers are in a bid to hire and take

their employees through this training however when it is all said and done there are some challenges that continue to press an issue for employees' performance and productivity taking into consideration that other factors like an organisations working condition, wages and organisational culture are constant.

These challenges continue to exist because of differences between what is taught in vocational schools and what exactly is needed or practiced in the real world in various organisations. Vocational institutions have a set curriculum that is intended to provide the students with what is considered as useful and needed on the job market. However with constant changes in the economy today those changes to keep on changing and yet the curriculum is not revised which brings about an imbalance. Individuals find that when they go out into the working world they cannot fully put their acquired skills to use because they don't fit, are out-dated or don't achieve effective results. In the report of the European Network of Education Councils 2011, it was discussed that there is need for more evidence based knowledge on the developments that take place in the different organisations under each labour market that actively takes on vocational trainees as well as the skills needed and competencies required. A bridge in the gap between employers and trainers is necessary to develop a close cooperation with the very individuals that forecast the skills needs and developments in the markets.

Lesther (2003) continues to emphasise this fact by addressing the fact that the world needs a new generation of explorers for the civic life on which the worlds success and development at large depends on. This statement is supported by Kawaski and Macintosh (1990) who describes explorers as individuals who possess passion, energy, the ability to handle stress and ambiguity, possess self-confidence, ability to work in groups and be able to deliver results. Passion is the most important and central element for training and this can be triggered in a student or employee by the educator or supervisor by concentrating on the

student or employees interests. Self-confidence is necessary for employees to survive in the competitive world today. It is key that an individual believes that he can be the best and can win so that they can work tirelessly to achieve positive results as indicated by Macintosh. This type of education and training should be carried out mainly by vocational institutions and should ideally be adopted by all even those that are vocational. Such qualities are difficult to instil in all individuals because personalities vary, education standards, environment and so on with every employee. It cannot be expected that all individuals who undergo vocational training have the same quality of education or are provided with the same opportunities to present the same results in the end. Therefore for these reasons challenges still exist in many organisations and affect employees' performance.

In regards to human capital obsolescence cannot be avoided even with the greatest of efforts simply because the world is changing. Kaufman (1974) defines obsolescence as the degree to which professionals lack the up to date knowledge and skills to effectively maintain performance in their current or future work roles. He goes on to say that obsolescence is categorised into two main categories that is physical and economic skill obsolescence. Physical looks at the way skills and abilities of an individual deteriorate due to wear and tear. On the other hand economic obsolescence looks at cases where skills that were previously utilised in a job are no longer required or have diminished in importance.

The European centre for development of vocational training carried out a survey in four countries that is Finland, Germany, Hungary and Netherlands. The survey looked at how many people in all the given age brackets felt that their skills were becoming obsolete. The most affected age group was 30-55 and this is the age bracket where majority of the workers in Uganda lie. In the survey almost half of the employees in different organisations believe that the skills they possess are below those required when they started working in their current line of work. The statistics included 30% in Germany, 16% in Finland and so on.



About 20% of the workers in the different countries feel like they are unable to handle the important physical aspects of the job as well as they did two years back. Although obsolescence is most likely to affect those who have not received any training with a statistic of 34% but even those who have received continuous vocational or normal training 22% of those are still affected by it. In the four countries that the survey was carried out, workers whose skill development had stagnated or declined are more likely to worry about losing their jobs which worry led to poor performance and affected their chances of career progression CEDEFOP 2012. In most cases employees whether they have gone through vocational training or not cannot suppress this challenge or avoid it because change is a constant factor in life. Vocational training by providing individual with different approaches to how an individual can carry out a task prolongs the process of obsolescence but it does not do away with it entirely. There is still need to figure out how the issue of obsolescence can be controlled or eliminated.

Some challenges affecting individuals even after they have undergone vocational training are due to matters beyond their control like constant changes in technology. Technology has gone through an evolution over the years and with it has come changes that cannot be resisted. Globalization of markets is a growing concern that can only be met by adopting technology. Most organisations have been forced to get on board with this change and in turn their employees have had to follow suit. Since the changes are constant, there is a need to stay relevant which requires that the employees are retrained and at times this is a problem because as age goes on retaining capacity reduces and some employees have to be replaced. Even though these employees have numerous skills they acquired through vocational training they cannot resist technological changes. Gagnon and Dragon (1990) argue that in most cases employees feel that the technological changes gone through by an organisation are not planned and therefore the employees are not consulted on the new changes which bring about

the element of shock, surprise and denial or resistance to these changes. Even though some individuals have undergone vocational training they are not fully equipped to handle abrupt changes and this can affect their performance negatively.

It is difficult to categorise all employees or individuals who underwent vocational training as facing the same challenges because some challenges are only faced at a personal level seeing as every individual's personality and situation differs from the next person and so it cannot be assumed that all challenges affect each and every employee.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Vocational training as discussed above has a significant positive impact on employee performance when applied correctly in terms of increased self-motivation, enhanced creativity and innovation, professionalism, self-confidence and the fact that individuals who have undergone vocational training need less supervision and guidance. This leads to increased productivity in the organisation, there is reduced time wastage on every process, reduced cycle time for production, more team effort and coordination, increased quality of products to mention but a few. Regardless of all the above benefits however, vocational training in Uganda today is still on a small scale and is regarded as a second resort to the university education. The people who embark on the vocational training journey usually do so because they lack the tuition to enrol in university or college or did not attain the required points for university intake. Therefore this system is filled with dropouts at all levels starting from primary seven all the way to senior six. Since it is taken as a second option, most cases individuals do not enrol because they have a natural born talent for a specific vocation but rather are in the need to acquire a skill that can enable them to make a living in the future.

By discovering all the benefits associated with vocational training, many organisations will be encouraged to take on more employees with a background of vocational training and this will encourage more individuals to enrol and acquire skills especially those talented in a given field rather than take this type of education as a second option and therefore encourage the growth of the vocational system and number of people who join vocational institutions which will generally improve employment situations in the country in the long run.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter gives a brief overview of various steps and methods which were used by the researcher. These include research design, target population, sample and sampling procedure, instruments for data collection, validity and reliability of the research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Orodho (2005) states that research design is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation Proposed for obtaining answers to research questions .This study adopted a case study design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative approach was used because it helped the researcher develop a deeper insight and better understanding of the phenomena as it was very important in testing the hypothesis of the study. The quantitative approach was used to interpret the codes that were attached to the questionnaires so as to bring about the degree of relationship between the variables.

#### **3.2 Area of Study**

The case study was chosen among the well-established and well recognised vocational institutes in Uganda with my choice being Nakawa Vocational Institute. It is the oldest vocational institute in Uganda located along Jinja road in Kampala city and has a known record of producing the most competent individuals who go ahead to showcase that the vocational training they achieve is beneficial.

### **33. Target Population.**

This study constituted trainees of Nakawa Vocational Institute; therefore the researcher's population of study was 320 trainees from the institute. The researchers study concentrated on how these trainees are performing as employees of Nile breweries, Kakira Sugar Works and Coca Cola in their different capacities and categories as managers, foremen, supervisors, machine operators, technicians, plumbers, welders and so on.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

The sample size of the study was established using Roscoe's (1975) rule of the thumb. According to him sample size between 30 and 500 is sufficient; therefore the researcher used a sample size of 158 respondents for the study broken down as follows;

<b>COMPANY</b>	<b>RESPONDENTS</b>
NILE BREWERIES	<b>68</b>
KAKIRA SUGAR WORKS	<b>58</b>
COCA COLA	<b>32</b>

### **3.5 Sampling Technique**

The researcher used the non-probability sampling techniques and this constituted both purposive and convenient sampling methods. The Purposive method was used in cases where particular information for the study was needed from the respondents while convenience sampling technique was also used as the researcher concentrated on the individuals who were easily found.

### **3.3 Sampling Techniques.**

This technique selected a sample without bias from sample size. Items were picked at random from a list container or table of random numbers. The technique was used in the study because it ensured that each member of the sample size had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. This research therefore used stratified random sampling.

### **3.6 Sources of Data**

The researcher used both primary and secondary methods of data collection during the study. The primary methods constituted questionnaire and interview method, and these helped the researcher obtain first-hand information from the field. The secondary method included library sources such as text books and journals, also under this source the internet was used so as to mainly enrich the existing literature on this study.

### **3.7 Data Collection Tools**

#### **3.7.1 Interview**

This method of data collection constituted of opened ended questions which the researcher asked the respondents concerning the study. The respondents included technicians, operators, machine personnel, managers and foremen from the three companies .An interview guide was

also used to keep track during the interview. This method was used to interview those people who were not comfortable with writing and reading.

### **3.7.2 Questionnaires**

This involved a set of questions to which the people picked for the sample size responded in writing. The questionnaires were designed to assist on acquiring both the qualitative data and quantitative data because both open and closed questions were asked to the respondents. This method catered for those respondents who were busy and had limited time for the interview.

### **3.8 Validity**

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) observe that an instrument may be constructed to measure a number of things hence the validity of such instruments must be established. They further stress that before testing the questionnaire, it will be important to define the variables to be measured and ask the experts in the area of research to evaluate the content of the questionnaires to determine their content and face validity.

### **3.9 Reliability**

It is a measure of degree to which a research instrument gives consistent results after repeated trials. The reliability of instruments will be ascertained by testing the questionnaires and by carrying out a pilot study.

### **3.10 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher obtained a letter of permission from the University to carry out research, and then consult the responsible authorities in the field as regards the case study. The researcher then prepared the instruments for collecting data, pre-tested the instruments, went to the field

collected data, then analysed the data collected, wrote a report on the field results and finally submitted in the final report know as a dissertation.

### **3.11 Data Analysis Techniques**

The findings of the research were written down and worked out, edited and analyzed using comparison and percentage approaches with the help of SPSS 16.0 computer program to draw conclusions and recommendations. This helped the researcher to determine the extent of relationship between variables that is vocational training and employee performance in light of research objectives and literature review.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher ensured confidentiality during the study; the researcher ensured not to pay money for answers in the field and sought for informed consents. And finally the researcher did not force respondents to give information in line with the study.

### **3.13 Limitations of the Study**

In this study the researcher faced the following problems:

- Inadequate response to the questionnaires and this led to the delay of compiling the research findings from the field. However this problem was overcome by encouraging respondents to fill in the questionnaires and assuring them that the data was solely for academic purposes.
- Some information about the company in line with the study was hard to access and this led to making conclusions which were not supported by clear evidence. However this problem was overcome by adequately using the available information on the study to make valid conclusions.



- A problem of finances also caused some delays due to the increased inflation in the country. This problem was solved by working within the budget constraint.

### **3.14 Conclusion**

This chapter has represented the research design, study population, area of study, sample size and selection that the researcher will use to carry out research. It has also represented the different methods and techniques of data collection, validity and reliability and finally it shows the ethical consideration that the researcher will follow when carrying out this research.

The next chapter is chapter four and it will describe the Presentation of analysis and discussion of findings of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of findings on the role of vocational training in improving employee performance. It is based on biographic data and objectives of the research which include finding out how training and skills assists towards improving employee performance in an organization, to find effective ways vocational trainees can best put to use their skills to achieve maximum productivity and to investigate why individuals who have undergone vocational training still face challenges in organizations. It has been presented in form of tables and graphs of percentages and frequencies.

The information in this chapter was obtained mainly using questionnaires. One hundred fifty eight questionnaires were issued out but only 122 were filled as in the table below. Since the researcher used three different organizations and a large number of people they were able to obtain a variety of responses which provided adequate information to compile these findings.

**Table 4.1: Number of respondents**

<b>Details</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Responses	122	77
Non response	36	33
<b>Total no of questionnaires</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>100</b>

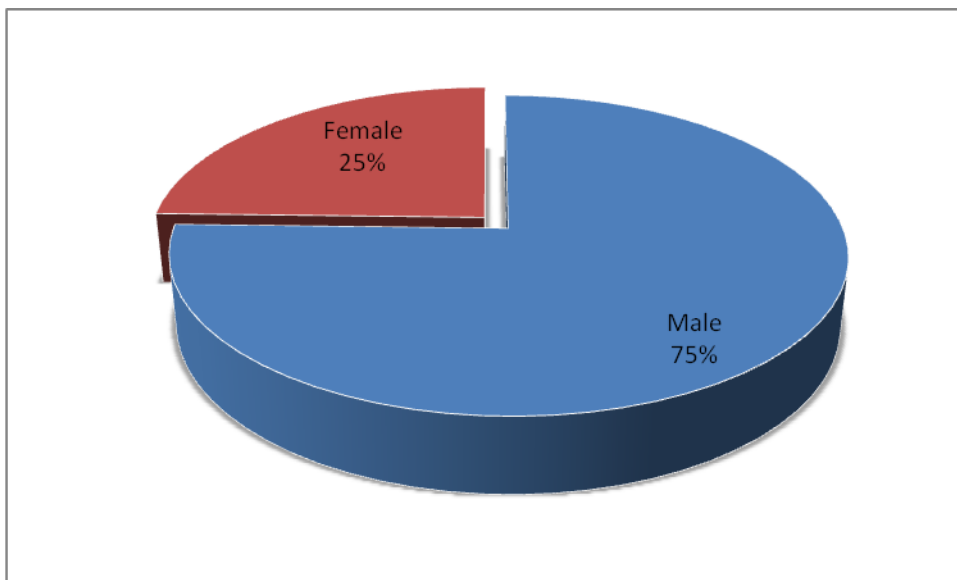
**Source: Primary Data 2014**

From Table 4.2, 77% responds and 33 % did not respond to the questionnaires. This shows a good turn up of the respondents despite the fact that they were scattered around the different companies.

#### 4.1 Demographic Information

Under this the researcher covered the gender of respondents, their age brackets, place of work, position held at work and duration at place of work.

**Figure 4.2: Gender**



**Source: Primary Data 2014**

From figure 4.2 75% of the respondents were male while 25% were female. This shows that research was not gender balanced and companies such as coca cola, Nile breweries and Kakira sugar Works send more male employees for training than female. This is because in most cases the work required in these organisations is more taxing and better suited for men than women despite the popular talks on gender equality, men seem better suited in these sections.

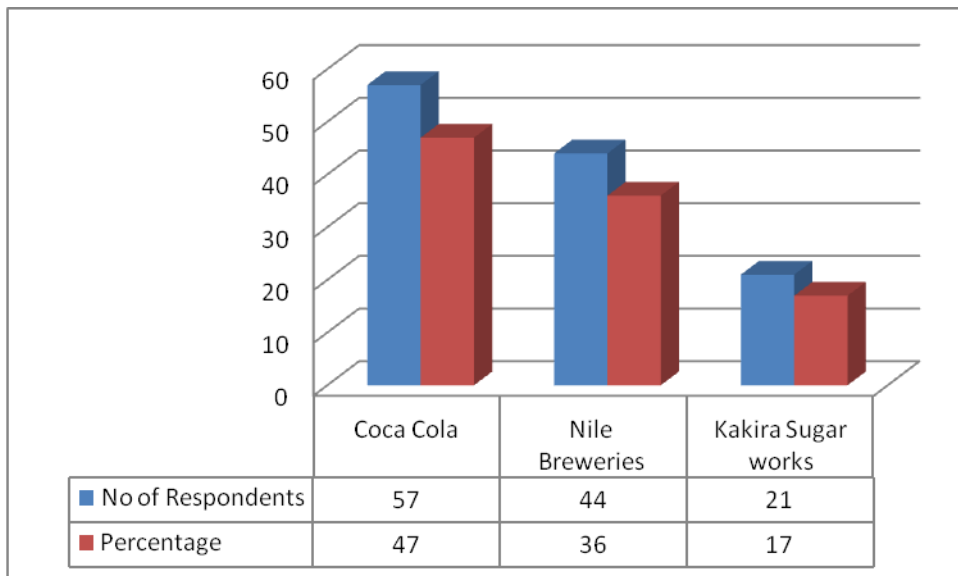
**Table 4.2: Age of Respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	13	11
31-40	88	72
41 and above	21	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary data 2014**

From table 4.3, 11% of respondents were between the age of 21-30, 72% were between 31 - 40 and 17% were between 41 and above. This shows that most of the respondents were mature people.

**Figure 4.3: Place of work**



**Source: Primary Data 2014**

From figure 4.3, 47% of respondents were from Coca cola, 36% were from Nile Breweries and 17% were from Kakira Sugar Works. This implies that both the management of Coca cola and Nile Breweries have tried to ensure that they employ and take on many people who have undergone vocational training or educating their employees as opposed to Kakira Sugar Works. Coca cola and Nile Breweries have with the recent times adopted more machine based production and use a lot of technology in their productions seeing as they produce beverages, therefore this form of production requires specific skills and proper knowledge and understanding which vocational trainees and graduates understand and so can perform maximally as compared to Kakira which needs even semi-skilled labour to harvest, pick the can and so on.

**Table 4.4: Position held at place of work**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Manager	17	13
Foreman	9	7
Supervisors	37	30
Other positions	62	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data 2014**

From table 4.4, 13% of the respondents were Managers, 7% were foremen and 37% were supervisors and the majority filled other positions that had not been specifically identified at 62%. This implies that the three companies train and employ more of other position fillers like company electrician, plumber, IT specialist than supervisors who are directly responsible

to the employees who are under them. This is because the companies in general have many other various positions that are occupied by employees that the researcher did not cover showing that vocational training produces various professions all which are necessary for the operations of the companies to go on like machine operators, mechanics, and welders and so on.

**Table 4.5: Duration at place of work**

<b>Duration</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1-3 years	21	17
3-5 years	74	61
5-7 years	16	13
7 years and above	11	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary data 2014**

From table 4.5, 17% of the respondents have been in their companies between 1-3 years, 61% have worked between 3-5 years, 13% have worked between 5-7 years and 9% have worked in their companies for more than 7 year. This implies that the companies retain their employees.

From the findings, Nile Breweries had the highest retention levels with most employees working between 3-7 years in the same place. This is because the company employs competent people who usually know what is required, perform well are productive and so on. Kakira sugar Works however has a large number of semi-skilled employees who are easily replaceable and the distance and working conditions contribute a lot to the high turnover rate.

## 4.2 Findings on Training and Employee Performance

**Table 4.5 Training has helped me become more efficient and productive at my place of work.**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	6	5
Agree	15	12
Strongly agree	101	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

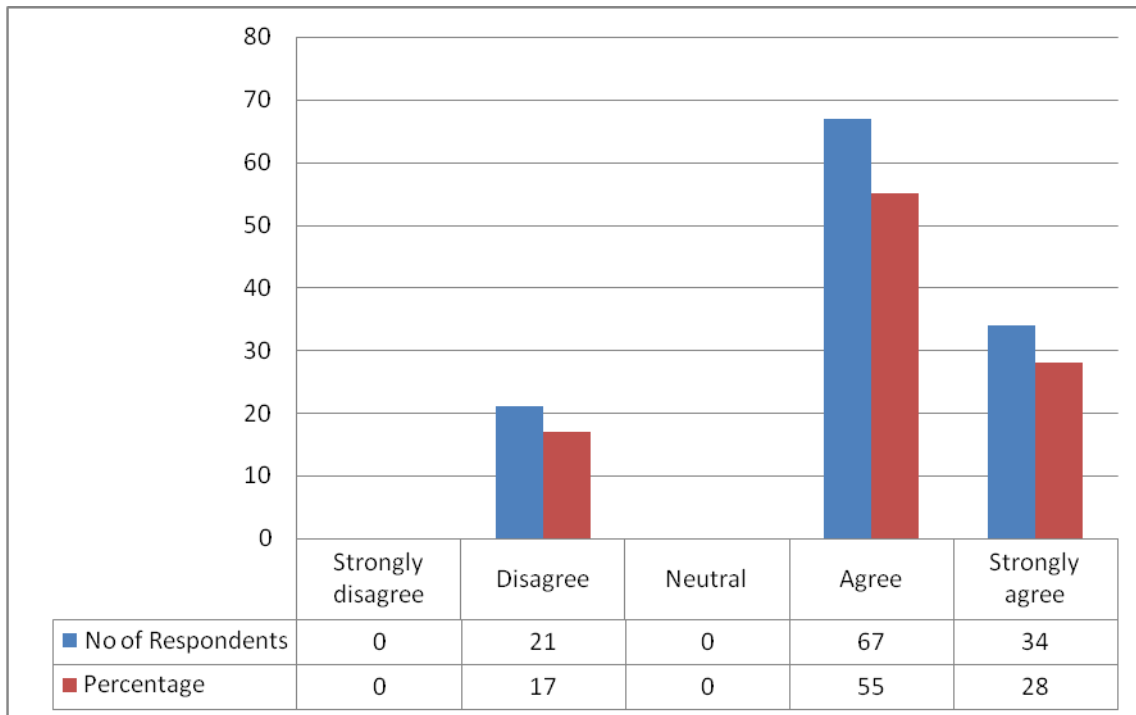
**Source: Primary Data 2014**

From Table 4.5, 12% of respondents agreed that training has helped trainees become more efficient and productive at their place of work. And 83% of them strongly agreed, 5% were not sure, and none of the respondents disagreed. This implies that through training employees are able to become more efficient and productive at work.

The above findings can therefore be supported by Zwick (2002) who asserted that vocational training involves teaching employees skills that can help them become more efficient and productive workers. The researcher discovered that through training these individuals learn new techniques, build on their talent and most of all build their confidence because when they get to apply the theory practically and gain positive outcomes from their work, they are

motivated to perform and so become better at what they do in all aspects, hence improving performance.

**Figure 4.4 Employee training has given me more confidence in performance at work**



**Source: Primary Data 2014**

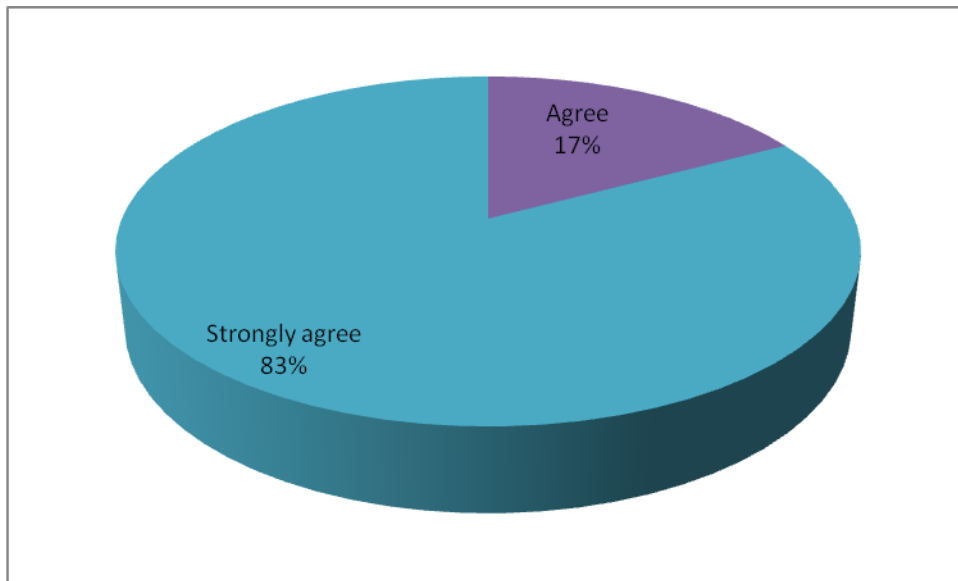
From figure 4.4, 17% of respondents disagreed that employee training has given trainees more confidence in performance at work, 55% agreed, and 28% strongly agreed. This implies that trained employees from the institute are confident at their work place.

The above findings are in agreement with Armstrong (2000) who contends that trained employees often work better as teams because everyone is aware of the expectations and can achieve them together smoothly. Trained employees are also more confident in their performance and decision-making skills.

With the training, the employees are schooled fully on what to do, they can therefore be more productive and so feel like an asset to the company giving them the needed confidence.



**Figure 4.5 Vocational training has prepared me for specialized occupations**



**Source: Primary Data 2014**

Basing on the above survey finding in figure 4.5, 17% agreed that Vocational training has prepared them for specialized occupations while 83% strongly agreed to the above question. This implies that vocational training prepared trainees for specialized occupations.

According to Conford (2005) vocational training is designed to prepare individuals for a vocation or specialized occupation. When placed in the right vocation, employees are guaranteed high chances of good performance which is directly linked with an organizations productivity and competitiveness.

**Table 4.6 Vocational training has prepared me to take on different categories of jobs**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	41	34
Neutral	6	5
Agree	65	53
Strongly agree	10	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data 2014**

From Table 4.6, 34% of respondents disagreed that vocational training has prepared employees to take on different categories of jobs, 5% were not sure, 53% agreed while 8% strongly agreed. This implies vocational training does prepare employees to take on different categories of jobs in their companies.

The above findings are in agreement with Gordon (1978) who asserts that vocational training is a system that prepares individuals for categories of jobs and families of occupations rather than focusing on single jobs or tasks and this education is there to embrace the fundamental purpose of education which is to provide opportunities and enable an individual have choices to choose from. Vocational training also provides the employees with various life skills which are considered to be useful and beneficial on a day to day basis as well as in the long run. The techniques used ensure that an individual is groomed all round, taking for example a machine operator could also carry out welding, assembling as when required.

**Table 4.7 Is Vocational training a condition for improving employee performance?**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	112	91
No	10	9

**Primary Data**

Out of the total number of respondents who took part in this research, 91% suggested that vocational training is indeed a condition for improving employee performance. This goes in line Conford (2005) who said that vocational training is designed to prepare individuals for a vocation or specialised occupation. When placed in the right vocation, employees are guaranteed high chances of good performance which is directly linked with an organisations productivity and competitiveness. The participants came up with different reasons for supporting vocational training and these include; vocational training equips you with new techniques and ways of doing a job that is unique and more productive, the methods used in passing on information and knowledge in vocational training are thorough and help us to retain a lot of knowledge and be able to apply it at work in a way that is more beneficial.

These responses demonstrated that vocational training does indeed contribute to improved employee performance. The employees expressed that through vocational training they were able to gain skills and techniques of carrying out their work which they would not have otherwise learnt from ordinary school. The methods vocational training uses facilitate faster learning, more retention and boost more interest among the employees. Many employees pointed out that vocational training gave them more life skills in a short period that they have continued to use to date from the time they started working in Coca Cola, Nile and Kakira.

**Table 4.8 Do you feel that the skills you acquired in your vocational training have improved on your knowledge of the job requirements?**

<b>Category</b>	<b>response</b>	<b>percentage</b>
Yes	118	96
No	4	4

**Source: Primary data**

96% of the employees in all the three companies felt that the skills they acquired from vocational training had improved their knowledge of what exactly the job requires and only 4% disagreed. The reasons as to why they felt that their performance had improved did not differ from Gordon (1978) who asserts that vocational training also provides the employees with various life skills which are considered to be useful and beneficial on a day to day basis as well as in the long run. The techniques used ensure that an individual is groomed all round, can multitask or specialize, is flexible and most importantly professional. Participants in the study felt that it provides people with the skills and techniques that are needed to perform a job and that the system usually builds on the already existing talent of an individual, moulds it and enhances their chances of success at the job. Individuals are given a well outlined time period to learn and obtain the knowledge and to solidify the learning they concentrate on one major area of interest and master it. They learn both the practical and theoretical aspects of a job and so know what is expected of them. The employees highlighted that the training improved their efficiency, ability to innovate and be creative so they are able to improvise at the job.

**Table 4.9 Does your job position provide favourable situations for you to put the acquired training and skills to use?**

<b>category</b>	<b>response</b>	<b>percentage</b>
Yes	74	60
No	48	40

**Source: Primary data**

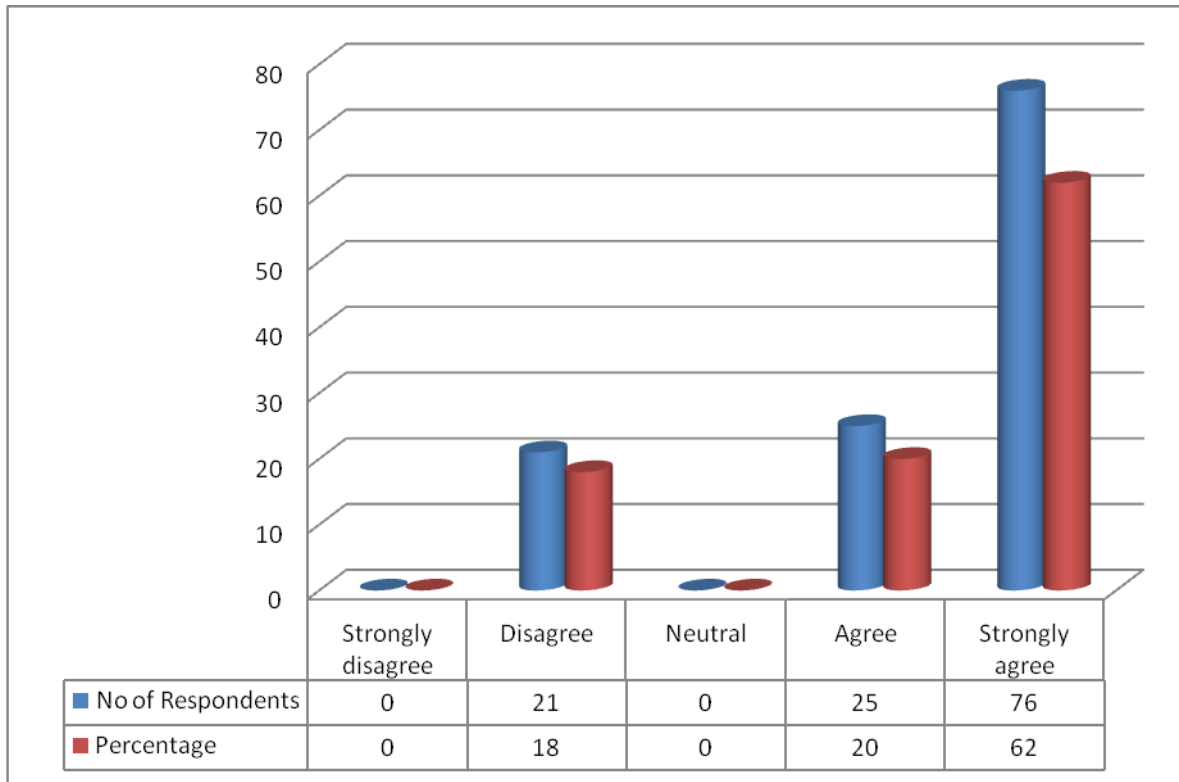
This question was intended to elicit employees’ personal perspectives and to find out whether the organisations used in the sample size were facilitating their development. Of the total number of respondents used, 60% of the employees noted out the fact that in most cases they work in areas they trained in because they would otherwise be unable to be productive because the vocational training programme has a variety of courses and in most cases skills cannot be transferred across different departments or jobs and so when they are employed they work where they have the most experience or knowledge. This is the way the organisations contribute to providing favourable situations for the employee to put their acquired training and skills to use. Some of the responses included, “my job allows me to be within reach of the factory and machinery so I can access them easily when needed.” This implies that the case in subject who deals with machinery on a day to day basis is facilitated to do well by the organisation that placed them in an area closer to the machinery.

However 40% of the employees felt that their organisations did not cater for them adequately and these are some of the areas that can be used for further study. Due to high levels of unemployment many of the employees settled for jobs in areas they did not train for or worse still made do with bad conditions even in the areas they trained for taking for example not having protective clothing, properly outlined work schedules and loose supervision to

mention but a few. Such circumstances eventually affect the overall performance of the employees and minimise the success rates of vocational trainees.

### 4.3 Findings on Specialization & Apprenticeship and employee performance

**Figure 4.6 Specialization increases workers efficiency when given tasks**



**Source: Primary Data 2014**

Figure 4.6 above, shows that 62% respondents strongly agreed that specialization increases workers efficiency when given tasks, 20% agreed while 18% disagreed with the above question. This illuminated more light on what Newell and Rosenbloom (1981); Argote (1999). When a worker completes many tasks during a day, specialization helps the worker quickly complete the focal task and limits costly changeovers (Cellier and Eyrolle 1992; Schultz, McClain and Thomas 2003). Additionally, over the course of a day, variety may be sufficiently distracting therefore mixing the two strategies negatively impacts workers'

current productivity.

With specialization, a worker is given responsibility in one area where they have greater skill, more talent, love or simply one which suits them best. This implies that they are generally comfortable with this job and so channeling all their energy into one job brings about efficiency.

**Table 4.10 Employee Specialization creates higher job returns among workers**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	6	5
Neutral	39	32
Agree	72	59
Strongly agree	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

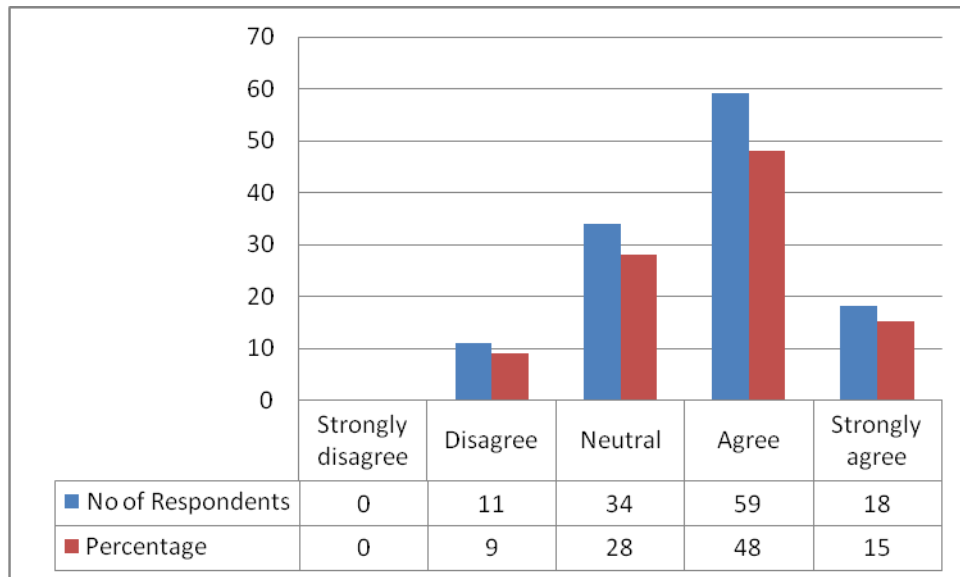
**Source: Primary Data 2014**

From Table 4.10, 5% of respondents disagreed that employee specialization creates higher job returns among workers, 32% were not sure, 59% agreed while 4% strongly agreed. Basing on the majority of the respondents, this implies employee specialization creates higher job returns among workers in their companies.

This was observed by Cole in his writings Cole (2002) who asserted that work specialization contributes to higher employee productivity, but at the price of reduced job satisfaction.

Negative behavioral outcomes from high specialization are most likely to surface in professional jobs occupied by individuals with high needs for personal growth and diversity.

**Figure 4.7 Specialization improves work performance**



**Source: Primary Data 2014**

From figure 4.7, 9% of respondents disagreed that specialization improves work performance, 28% were not sure, 48% and 15% strongly agreed. This proves that specialization improves work performance.

The above findings are in agreement with Armstrong (2010) who contends that job specialization often increases work efficiency, however, it doesn't necessarily improve job performance or employee well-being. Specialization involves focusing on one area and perfecting it or doing it to the best capacity. When workers concentrate on one area, confusion, mix-ups and errors are eliminated so this helps to improve their performance in terms of better products, less time wastage and errors.



#### 4.11 Apprenticeship helps employees really understand the working world combining practical skills with theoretical knowledge

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	21	17
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	72	59
Agree	29	24
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

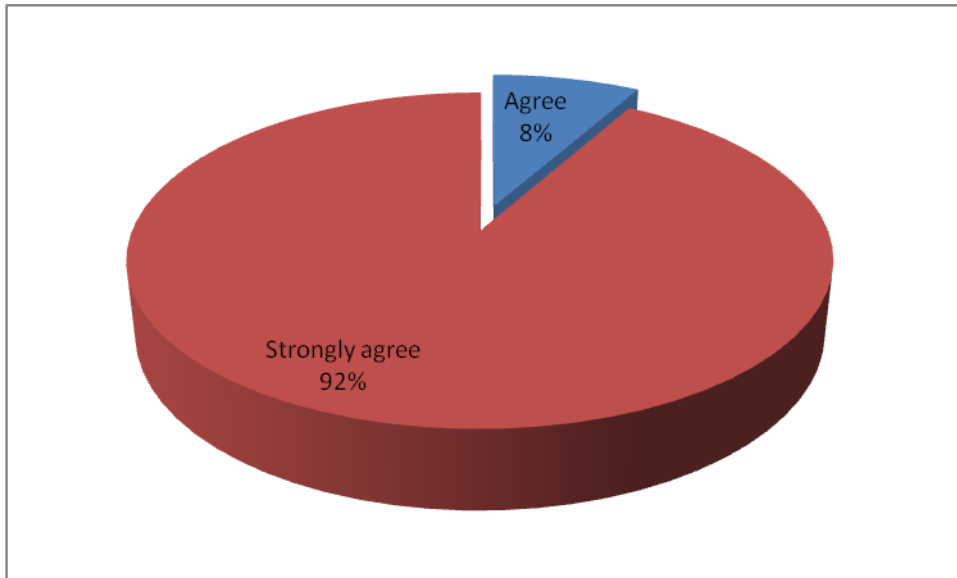
**Source: Primary Data 2014**

Table 4.11 above shows that 17% respondents said that apprenticeship helps employees really understand the working world combining practical skills with theoretical knowledge, 59% were not sure and 24% agreed. The findings under this objective agrees with Hussey (2004) who asserted that apprenticeship programs provide employees with comprehensive training in the practical and theoretical aspects of the work required in a highly skilled occupation. It combines both on the job and classroom training to prepare employees for highly skilled jobs.

Apprenticeship is a technique of teaching that has been used over the years to pass on knowledge and is still being used to date. Once individuals have completed their theoretical course they are given a stated period of time say about three months to work in a place of their choice so that they can practically apply their classroom knowledge, seal in the techniques and also learn their future job requirements. This gives them an added advantage

in a way that they become more confident and aware as to what to do when employed which boosts better performance.

**Figure 4.8 Apprenticeship leads to more improved work force**



**Source: Primary Data 2014**

Table 4.8 above shows that 92% of the respondents said that apprenticeship leads to a more improved work force while 8% disagreed to this question. These findings are in agreement with the research work of Warnich (2006) who asserted that apprenticeship is designed to provide the skills and experiences necessary to practice the occupation through further skills and qualifications. Apprenticeship programs are monitored by a comprehensive quality control system that includes examinations and education, legal, administrative and political components.

During apprenticeship, employees learn what is required of them as individuals, a team, and department of organization as a whole. They quickly learn the goals and objectives and work well to contribute to them being achieved since they have prior knowledge about them.

**Table 4.12 Apprenticeship helps employees qualify to become potential recruits and equips them with skills suited to the job.**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	111	91
Strongly agree	11	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data 2014**

From Table 4.12, 91% of respondents agreed that apprenticeship helps employees qualify to become potential recruits and equips them with skills suited to the job while 9% strongly agreed.

By participating in the apprenticeship programs of different organisations, the researcher discovered from both the employees and employers that this system is an avenue for recruitment. If an individual is identified as to being skillful, hardworking and dedicated during this program they can easily be singled out by the management and retained to work permanently without applying but instead letting their skills speak for themselves.

### **4.3 How has specialisation contributed towards improving your performance as an employee of this organisation?**

Of the respondents who answered to the above question, 92% said yes and 8% did not agree to the notion that specialisation contributed towards improving their performance in the different organisations.

The employees who were in agreement to the notion that specialisation improves their performance stated that it helped them concentrate all their efforts on one area that suits them which results in better work performance. The employees who included technicians, welders, machine operators and managers indicated that specialisation also helped them to master the arts and tricks required to perform distinctively at their various jobs.

The respondents emphasised the fact that continuously doing something leads to perfection even though one was not good at it from the beginning. With specialisation, employees are able to master all the aspects of the job, reduce mistakes, reduce on time wastage and in the end perform better overall due to the constant practice. Most of the employees from Coca Cola and Nile breweries who work in a chain belt of continuous production have more to say about this section because their jobs require them to master one area and perfect it because one person's error affects all the others and the final product as a whole. Perfection and mastering techniques is an indicator of specialisation which implies that specialisation is therefore required for better performance.

Some 8% disagreed stating that specialisation encourages monotony and if a person has no new challenges they did not grow or learn. They suggested that job enlargement or job rotation to integrate new tasks and provide more challenges would better boost the employment and lead to improved performance.

#### **4.4 How has apprenticeship contributed towards improving your performance as an employee of the organisation?**

The same percentage of employees (92%) also agreed that apprenticeship has contributed towards improving their performance in the different organisations. The employees' realised apprenticeship as the part of training that involved them working directly in the area they trained for in a specific organisation before they are officially employed or taken on as employees. About 92% agreed that apprenticeship enabled them to transfer all their theoretical lessons and apply them to their jobs. It also provided a test run to determine whether the training was effective or not, whether they were able to retain anything or not. The employees also pointed out that the best part about apprenticeship was that it helped them to get used to the jobs demands, people, supervisors and mainly the expectations. Many said that they got knowledge of the pressure points involved with doing the particular jobs, got time to practice and get rid of the fears of making mistakes at work which helped them to qualify to become a potential recruit for the company of their choice. These responses show that apprenticeship has a positive impact on employees performance overall.

However the 8% who did not agree to the notion that apprenticeship contributed towards improving employee performance also gave their views stating that sometimes what they were taught during the training course clashes with the practices carried out in their organisations, that even with apprenticeship or n job practice people can forget what is needed and still mess up and need reorientation which is all the same. Some other practices like good orientation programmes, work groups, job security could improve performance rather than apprenticeship.

#### 4.5 Ways individuals can best use their skills to achieve maximum productivity

**Table 4.13 Direct participation in tasks and group work enables me to put my skills to test**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	0	0
Strongly agree	122	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data 2014**

Table 4.13 above shows that all the respondents strongly agreed that direct participation in tasks and group work enables me to put my skills to test, these findings are in agreement with the research work of Glueck (1974) who said that employees to best use their skills in a bid to improve performance, there is need to be placed and be part of a functional team. Where in this case team or work groups according to him is a set of people with whom an individual interacts in order to complete a task.

**Table 4.14 Employees need to be placed in the right and suitable job for their skills to be productive**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	4	3
Agree	76	62
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	42	35
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data 2014**

Basing on the above survey finding in table 4.14, majority of the respondents (62%) agreed that employees need to be placed in the right and suitable job for their skills to be productive. 35% agreed while 3% strongly disagreed. These findings are in line with the research work of Sekiguchi (2003) who asserted that supplementary fit is a condition in which the characteristics of a person are similar to the environment of an organization or with the people within the organization this focuses on the compatibility of an employee with the environment of the organization.

For employees to work and be productive they have to be placed in a job they actually trained for. It becomes unrealistic and next to impossible to expect a plumber for example to perfectly carry out managerial work or welding or operating machinery. Therefore the ideal situation is for every employee to work in an organization that is a good match for them in a

sense that they can relate to the culture, job requirements and values and people so that they can exploit their potential and be more productive.

**Table 4.15 Job rotation helps me to best use my skills to improve performance**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	27	22
Neutral	4	3
Agree	87	72
Strongly agree	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data 2014**

Table 4.15 above shows that 72% respondents agree with the statement that job rotation helps employees to best use their skills to improve performance, 22% disagreed, 3% were not sure while the other 3% strongly agreed.

Therefore, the above findings agree with the research work of Metin and Thomas (1998) who asserted that job rotation is a well-known method to get employees to increase skill usage, learn new tricks and reduce monotony at work, it involves assigning a worker to a series of tasks in the same job bracket along which an individual rotates with some frequency. In this practice, an individual is involved in all aspects of production and not just one area.

From the research, the researcher discovered that in job rotation an employee is involved in all aspects of production and not in just one area so the worker rotates around all the tasks



involved, masters them and can carry out any at the required time. This way they broaden their skill base and keep challenging themselves to learn new things which are interesting and motivate them to perform better.

**Table 4.16 Proper supervision and guidance at work enables an individual to use their skills in a way that is productive**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	106	87
Strongly agree	16	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: primary Data 2014**

From Table 4.16, 87% of respondents agreed that proper supervision and guidance at work enables an individual to use their skills in a way that is productive while 13% strongly agreed to the above question.

Employees need to be properly supervised and guided on what to do especially at the beginning of their career to try and minimize errors and mistakes that could potentially be damaging to their efforts. Supervisors and managers need to clearly state and outline dos and don'ts, expectations, company policies and so on which these employees should follow while

putting to use their acquired skills. This way, they can grow as employees and individuals and contribute better towards the success of the organization.

#### **4.6 What conditions are necessary for employees to utilize their skills maximally?**

The employees’ responses highlighted that most employees need proper working conditions to be able to utilise their skills. This includes space to work, proper lighting, protective gear, rest and breaks and so on. Every human being requires a certain level of conditions to be able to be productive. It is almost impossible to be productive in harsh conditions so the organisations have to ensure that the employees are well facilitated to be comfortable enough to work. The common responses for the conditions needed to utilise skills highlighted that prompt payment of salaries can motivate employees to work harder as they feel that their hard work is being recognised. Employees realised that they needed to practice direct participation of tasks to be able to use all those skills that they acquired. These responses revealed that in this case, both external and internal conditions can transfer into each other and work hand in hand to encourage full utilisation of employee’s skills. A person has to be well internally to make use of the external factors like flexible working hours, equipment, and protective gear to be productive.

**Table 4.17 Do you feel that constant exercise at work benefits your skill development? If so how?**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	113	92
No	9	8

**Source: Primary data**

The employees realised that constant practice is a key factor in building experience and expertise as regards to tasks; employees build a body of skills that are relevant to the job. About 92% answered yes and felt that doing constant exercises was helpful while 8% disagreed. Doing a series of tasks over and over again helps to polish out the rough patches and so helps employees to perfect their skills and then apply them practically in their work making them more efficient which is a sign of improved performance. Many employees felt that constant exercise was a method used to keep them from losing their skills, becoming dormant and less alert at work. Many welcome the idea of constant exercise not as a punishment but as help to them to keep them relevant and of value. The employees especially those from Coca Cola .stated that practice helped them to perfect which ever skill they concentrated on. By doing something over and over again they realised that they were able to make it part of their daily routine without even making errors. Other realised that with constant practice they were able to identify a problem area that persisted and work towards correcting it to better their performance. This shows that constant practice and exercise that is done in vocational training positively contributes to employee's performance by boosting confidence and perfecting their skills which improves quality of work.

**4.7 Why individuals who have undergone vocational training still face challenges in different organizations.**

**4.18 There are still challenges vocational training did not prepare me to handle**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	15	13
Disagree	26	21
Neutral	0	0
Agree	0	0
Strongly agree	81	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data 2014**

From the above survey finding in table 4.18, majority of the respondents (66%) strongly agreed that there are still challenges vocational training did not prepare them to handle. Also 21% disagreed while 13% strongly disagreed.

These findings agree with the research work of European Network of Education Councils (2011) who contends that challenges continue to exist among vocational trainees because of differences between what is taught in vocational schools and what exactly is needed or practiced in the real world in various organizations. Vocational institutions have a set curriculum that is intended to provide the students with what is considered as useful and needed on the job market.

The researcher discovered that majority of the employees used in the sample size had a problem with loss of skills overtime as this is inevitable for human beings, the constant changes in technology today especially embracing digitalized era poses a threat to many of their jobs that can be replaced with machines. The machine operators had the biggest fear in this section seeing as automated machinery is becoming more common. Some argued that they still worked in harsh conditions especially those from Kakira sugar Works because they had to go long hours to harvest the cane, over a large scale and had little time to rest. Even with vocational training, some of these challenges cannot be avoided or evaded so they still affect many employees.

#### **4.19 Challenges at work have affected my confidence and performance**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	111	91
Strongly agree	11	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data 2014**

From Table 4.19, 91% of respondents agreed challenges at work have affected my confidence and performance while 9% strongly agreed. These findings agree with Gagnon and Dragon (1990) argue that in most cases employees feel that the technological changes gone through by an organization are not planned and therefore the employees are not consulted on the new

changes which bring about the element of shock, surprise and denial or resistance to these changes.

Many of the employees faced some challenges continuously and with no obvious and immediate solution present ended up feeling discouraged and so lost confidence in them to perform as expected at work. Constant worry and need for a solution affects many workers in these organisations which implies that even with training some problems cannot be avoided but rather solutions need to be found immediately.

#### **4.8 What challenges have continued to affect you as an individual regardless of the fact that you received vocational training?**

Employees still face challenges in their day to day operations that cannot be avoided even with vocational training. It has been discovered from the research that some of these challenges are inevitable even with training. This is because the situation of vocational training and employee performance is not one hundred per cent perfect and still faces some issues. These challenges come from all sorts of areas. Many employees pointed out language barrier especially those that did not prolong their high school education. Monotony of work and boredom is also more common than expected. With most employees specialising in one area and concentrating on what best suits them, they eventually start to lack a proper challenge and so get bored with their work. From the research, the researcher discovered that there were some challenges that were recurring among the respondents. Many of the employees stated that they had an issue with rude and mean supervisors who demoralised them and gave them a hard time at their jobs. Also they found it hard to balance time between the different tasks especially on the very large companies that carried out their operations over a large area case in point being Kakira Sugar Works. Salaries and wages were also a

main issue with many employees stating that it was not adequate for them to cover all their basic needs and necessities.

All the above challenges pose a threat to employee's performance because they distract them in their bid to perform outstandingly. People can't work well and to their best if they are constantly worried about something. Also these challenges eat away at the employee's confidence in themselves and what they are doing making it hard for them to perform as expected. These challenges have continued to exist because there is a difference between what is taught in vocational schools and what is exactly needed in the real world. Also personal challenges cannot be controlled by the programme. Furthermore the world is constantly changing and it is challenging enough just to keep up with these changes.

#### **4.9 What solutions have you come up with as an individual to deal with these challenges?**

In order for employees to deal with the various challenges and problems that have continued to affect them, many of them have thought out some possibilities that could help them deal with these issues. Many of the respondents considered further training to make them more equipped to handle various situations. Proper supervision, building good relationships with other employees, seeking counselling and guidance were also common responses. many employees suggested giving them more days off to refresh their bodies and minds, unwind and return to the job fresh. Other suggested that having an organised schedule to be able to manage their time between activities would be thoroughly helpful. Salary advances, increased wages, guidance and counselling would also help these employees.

These responses show that the employees are generally willing to work towards solving these problems. Similarly the responses to the solutions that the organisation can put in place were directed towards the same thing. The question in this case was, *how can the organisation*

*contribute towards eliminating these challenges?* Employees indicated that the organisations should facilitate talks for them to help them deal with these issues. Furthermore, they indicated that the management should follow step by step procedures of ensuring proper working conditions and safety of the employees they have. Making sure to protect each employee from harm would act as a great motivator to the employees and encourage them to put in more effort in their work hence improving performance.

#### 4.10 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was carried on the variables to ascertain whether there was any relationship between the variable and the strength of that relationship and the following were the results;

##### 4.10.1 Training skills and employee performance

**Table 4.20: Pearson’s correlation analysis between Training skills and employee performance**

		Vocational training	Employee performance
Vocational training	Pearson Correlation	1	.64**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	122	122
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	.64**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	122	122
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source Primary data 2014



Table 4.20 above presents the relationship between Training skills and employee performance, it indicates that there is positive and significant correlation ( $r = 0.64$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between Training skills and employee performance. Training and skills explain the variation in employee performance by 64% which implies that when training is conducted, it can lead to an increment of 64% in employee performance. This can be supported by Armstrong (2000) contends that trained employees often work better as teams because everyone is aware of the expectations and can achieve them together smoothly. Trained employees are also more confident in their performance and decision-making skills.

#### 4.10. 2Skill use and employee performance

**Table 4.21: Pearson’s correlation analysis between Skill use and employee performance**

		Skill use	Employee performance
Skill use	Pearson Correlation	1	.53**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	122	122
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	.53**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	122	122
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

**Source Primary data 2014**

Table 4.21 above presents the relationship between Skill use and employee performance, it indicates that there is a positive and significant correlation ( $r = 0.53, p < 0.01$ ) between Skill use and employee performance. If and when employees use their skills correctly and maximally it can result in an increase in employee performance by 53%. This can be supported by Glueck (1974) who said that employees to best use their skills in a bid to improve performance, there is need to be placed and be part of a functional team, where a team or work groups according to him is a set of people with whom an individual interacts in order to complete a task.

#### 4.10.3 Effect of Challenges and employee performance

**Table 4.22: Pearson’s correlation analysis between Challenges and employee performance**

		Challenges	Employee performance
challenges	Pearson Correlation	1	.42**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	122	122
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	.42**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	122	122
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

**Source primary data 2014**

Table 4.22 above presents the relationship between challenges and employee performance, it indicates that there is a positive and significant correlation ( $r = 0.420$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between challenges and employee performance. Challenges that continue to exist explain the reason for persistent variation in employee performance or in other words that due to the constant challenges, employee performance is negatively affected by 42%. Even with vocational training, different categories of employees still face various challenges that hinder their performance, productivity, motivation and confidence.

This is in agreement with the European Network of Education Councils 2011 that discovered that challenges continue to exist because of the differences between the taught curriculum and what exactly is needed or practiced in the real world in various organisations. Institutions set a curriculum intended to provide the students with what is considered useful and valuable on the labour market but with constant changes in the economy and technological world today, these changes contradict with the set curriculum bringing about an imbalance.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

The chapter has presented and discussed data from the field using both Microsoft Excel 2007 and SPSS version 16. This chapter has found out that there is a relationship between training, skills, skill use, challenges and employee performance.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study for the previous four chapters. This chapter also includes conclusions, recommendations for the study, and areas of further research suggested.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

##### **5.1.1 Training Skills and Employee Performance**

Correlation analysis conducted on Training skills and employee performance showed a fairly strong positive and significant effect ( $r = 0.64$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) that vocational training has on employee performance. This implies that training and skills assists towards improving employee performance in their respective organizations.

##### **5.1.2 Skill use and Employee Performance**

Correlation analysis conducted on Skill use and employee performance showed a positive and insignificant effect ( $r = 0.53$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) that Skill use and employee performance. This implies that if vocational trainees can best put to use their skills acquired from vocational institutions employee productivity can be improved.

##### **5.1.3 Effect of Challenges and Employee Performance**

Correlation analysis conducted on Challenges and employee performance showed a positive and insignificant effect ( $r = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) that is why individuals who have undergone vocational training still face challenges in different organizations. . This implies that challenges still exist among different individuals from the institution.

## **5.2. Conclusions**

Since correlation analysis showed that training, skill use for individuals who have undergone vocational training have positive effects on employee performance; the researcher therefore concludes that vocational training has a vital impact on employee performance in organization.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

1. Kakira sugar Works should consider informing and training its staff extensively to equip them with more skills in order to improve their performance. Also informing the employees about the procedures that they must go through to join vocational institutions for further training would be of assistance.
2. All the three organisations and companies should inform different vocational institutions of the available market for people who have undergone vocational training to encourage more people to enroll and study which will curb the employment as well as productivity issues faced by people today.
3. The researcher recommends that similar organizations should take their employees for further studies and offer them objective vocational training. The trainings should be followed by fair promotion and job enrichment, salary increment to stimulate higher employee performances.
4. The researcher recommends that the different organisations and companies specify their job needs and requirements so that individuals can attain training in areas that are marketable and can be useable which will increase productivity and so employee performance.

## 5.4 Areas of Further Study

The researcher recommends the following areas for future investigations which were not researched satisfactorily.

- Choosing the right vocational training for a given employee. This is a very important aspect for the employer to consider. The researcher was not satisfactorily able to make a thorough study on how to choose the right vocational training for a given employee and therefore recommends it for further research.
- The impact of work specialization on employee performance. The researcher also did not go deep into finding out the impact of work specialization on employee performance and therefore recommends it for future investigations.
- Problems encountered by employers when sponsoring their employees for vocational training. The major problems encountered by employers when sponsoring their employees for vocational training were not looked at exhaustively and therefore the researcher recommends it to be researched for by future researchers.
- Also the problems encountered by supervisors in regards to monitoring employees who had undergone training were not fully looked into and not all opinions and options were exhausted.
- The technological challenges individuals face when transitioning from the old technology studied in the institution to the new state of the art technology adopted by most of the companies was not looked into so there is need for further investigation.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Research Questionnaire

Dear Sir/ Madam,

My name is Nambi Joan, a student of Uganda Martyrs University pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Management. I am currently conducting a study on **ROLE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN IMPROVING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE** in your organization. The study is purely for academic purposes. The information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality. I therefore, humbly request you to spare some time and answer the following questions.

Thank you.

#### SECTION A:

#### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Tick appropriately.

##### 1. Gender

a) Male

b) Female

Please tick in the appropriate box

##### 2. Age bracket

a) 11-20  b) 21-30  c) 31-40  d) 41 and above

##### 3. What level of vocational training have you attained?

.....

**4. Place of work**

- a) Coca Cola     b) Nile Breweries     c) Kakira sugar Works

**5. Position held at place of work**

(Please tick the appropriate box)

- a) Manager     b) Foreman     c) supervisor

Any other position

.....

**6. Duration at place of work**

(Please tick the appropriate box)

- a) 1-3years     b) 3-5years     c) 5-7years     d) 7 years and above

**From section B-D, please tick in the box provided to indicate the response you think is most appropriate.**

Use the five points given below to base your response to the questions.

**1= strongly disagree    2= Disagree    3= Neutral    4= Agree    5= strongly agree**

**SECTION B**

	<b>Training</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1</b>	Training has helped me become more efficient and productive at my place of work.					
<b>2</b>	Employee training has given me more confidence in performance at work.					
<b>3</b>	Vocational training has prepared me for specialized occupations.					
<b>4</b>	Vocational training has prepared me to take on different categories of jobs.					
<b>5</b>	Vocational training has been an essential element in increasing my competitiveness in the organization by improving all round skills.					

6. Is vocational training a condition for improving employee performance?

**Yes**

**No**

If yes how?

.....

.....  
If no, what could be some of the reasons?

.....  
.....

7. Do you feel that the skills you acquired in your vocational training have improved on your knowledge of the job requirements?

**Yes**

**No**

If yes state how

.....  
.....

If no, state why

.....  
.....

8. Does your job position provide favourable situations for you to put the acquired training and skills to use?

**Yes**

**No**

If no state how this can be rectified

.....  
.....

## SECTION C

	<b>Specialization &amp;Apprenticeship</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1</b>	Employee Specialization creates higher job returns among employees					
<b>2</b>	Specialization helps the worker quickly complete the focal tasks and limits costly changeovers					
<b>3</b>	specialization increases efficiency and leads to higher organizational performance					
<b>4</b>	Apprenticeship helps employees really understand the working world combining practical skills with theoretical knowledge.					
<b>5</b>	Apprenticeship leads to more motivated and satisfied workforce					
<b>6</b>	Apprenticeship helps employees qualify to become potential recruits and equips them with skills suited to the job.					



7. How has specialisation contributed towards improving your performance as an employee of this organisation?

.....  
.....

8. How has apprenticeship contributed towards improving your performance as an employee of this organisation?

.....  
.....

9. Do you feel that apprenticeship has given you a proper understanding of the job and its requirements?

**Yes**    

**No**      

If yes how?

.....  
.....

If no, what could be some of the reasons?

.....  
.....

10. Do you feel that specialisation has given you a proper understanding of the job and its requirements?

**Yes**

**No**

If yes how?

.....  
.....

If no explain why

.....  
.....

## SECTION D

**Ways individuals can best use their skills to achieve maximum productivity.**

	<b>Skill use</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1	Direct participation in tasks and group work enables me to put my skills to test.					
2	Employees need to be placed in the right and suitable job for their skills to be productive.					
3	Skills have to be accompanied with an individuals in born talent to achieve maximum results					
4	Proper supervision and guidance at work enables an individual to use their skills in a way that is productive.					

5. What conditions are necessary for employees to utilise their skills maximally?

.....

.....

6. Do you feel that constant exercise at work benefits your skill development?

**Yes**

**No**

If yes how

.....

.....

If no what could be some of the reasons?

.....

.....

7. How has the way you use your skills contributed towards improving your employee performance?

.....

.....

**Why individuals who have undergone vocational training still face challenges in different organisations.**

	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1</b>	There are still challenges vocational training did not prepare me to handle.					
<b>2</b>	Challenges at work have affected my confidence and performance.					

3. What challenges have continued to affect you as an individual regardless of the fact that you received vocational training?

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4. What solutions have you come up with as an individual to deal with these challenges?

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5. How can the organisation contribute toward eliminating these challenges?

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6. How does constant change in technology affect your ability to maintain relevant skills and keep updated?

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**Thank you for your cooperation.**

**Appendix II: Interview Guide for Managers and Supervisors of Employees who went to Nakawa Vocational Institute.**

**Dear Sir/ Madam,**

My name is Nambi Joan, a student of Uganda Martyrs University pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Management. I am currently conducting a study on **ROLE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN IMPROVING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE** in your organization. The study is purely for academic purposes. The information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality. I therefore, humbly request you to spare some time and answer the following questions.

Thank you.

1.Position held

.....

2. How long have you been working here?

.....

3. Do you have employees from Nakawa vocational institute are under your guidance?

.....

4. Has the company or organisation benefitted from hiring individuals who have undergone vocational training?

Yes

No

If yes how?

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.....

If no, what could be some of the reason?

.....

.....

5. How does specialisation in a given field contribute towards an employee's productivity?

.....

.....

6. Does apprenticeship contribute towards reducing your work load as a supervisor?

Yes

No

If yes how?

.....

.....

If no, state why

.....

.....

8. What challenges do you face in monitoring and supervising individuals who have undergone vocational training?

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9. What solutions can you suggest for management to put in place in order to eliminate these challenges?

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10. What skills do individuals who have undergone vocational training possess that differentiate them from other employees?

.....

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11. What programmes do you feel the organisation needs to introduce to ensure that employees utilise all their skills?

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12. Any further information relevant to this study.

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