

Gender related challenges encountered by students in learning technical courses in Machakos Technical Training Institute, Machakos County, 2013

Mueni, Elijah Dorothy

Abstract:

This study aimed at exploring gender-related challenges faced by students in learning technical courses in Machakos Technical Training Institute (MTTI). The objectives of the study were to identify the courses male and female students were taking in MTTI, investigate gender-related challenges students faced in learning technical courses in MTTI and suggest ways of addressing these challenges. The study was guided by descriptive research. The nine departments in the institution were grouped into three clusters for the purpose of the study. One female, two male administrators and four heads of the selected departments were included as informants. Systematic sampling was used to select a sample of teachers while simple random sampling was used to select the students' sample. In total, 18 teachers, 207 male and 190 female students participated in the study. Data were collected using interview schedules for the administrators, heads of departments and teachers. A questionnaire was used for students. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) while qualitative data were presented through descriptive methodology. The study established that both male and female students faced challenges from teachers and classmates in learning the courses in MTTI. However, female students faced more challenges in learning Building and Civil Engineering (BCE), Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE) and Computing and Applied Sciences (CAS) courses. The study also revealed that students who were pursuing courses considered 'inappropriate' for them were perceived as incompetent. Consequently, they were ignored, intimidated, belittled, ridiculed, and labelled. The study concludes that male students dominated in learning engineering and technology courses while female students dominated in learning hospitality management and clothing technology courses. Although both male and female students faced gender related challenges in learning technical courses, female students faced more challenges. Some of the recommendations suggested were the Ministry of Education should develop gender responsive policies to empower male and female students to participate equally in learning technical courses, educate teachers and students to change their negative attitudes and beliefs towards students pursuing courses considered inappropriate for them and perceive them as competent and develop policies to enable male and female students to work together and enhance their self-esteem to participate equally in learning the courses regardless of gender. This will ensure that gender disparities are addressed hence equity and equality in learning technical courses are enhanced.