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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**THE IMPACT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING (VET) ON COMPANY
PERFORMANCE – CASE STUDY: CDC BOTA
LIMBE**

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Management In Partial Fulfilment Of The Requirements For The
Award Of A Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) In
Human Resource Management.*

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JUNE, 2015

THESIS FINAL SUBMISSION FORM

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved mother Ms Gladys Njaba.

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to assess the impact of Vocational Education and Training (VET) on company performance. It focuses on the effects that VET can have on a company as well as the workers in order to enhance productivity. Simple random sampling was used to select a sample of workers. Questionnaires were given to this sample population and personal interview was conducted with some heads of services. The variables on which data for this research was collected were based on the specific research questions which are: Does VET have a positive impact on company performance? Does the level of performance of the individuals in the company vary according to the level or size of VET? And lastly, does VET guarantee employability? The findings revealed that VET does have a positive impact, levels of performance vary according to VET size, and that VET does guarantee employability. One main problem is that the present review did not attempt to assess the precise values of the parameters reported, although it is concerned with the direction and strength of the relationships. The focus is more on the nature of the key indicators and the variables used in studies and the general nature of the relationships established. It is therefore important for the Government to increase the flexibility of VET within the mainstream education system. Also, employers should endeavor to provide vocational training to employees even after employment to enhance their skills and career development.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

VET - Vocational Education and Training

CDC - Cameroon Development Corporation

UIS - UNESCO Institute of Statistics

EI - Education International

ACE - Adult and Community Education

TAFE - Technical and Further Education

TVET - Technical and Vocational Education and Training

EFA - Education For All

TVE - Technical and Vocational Education

IIEP - International Institute of Educational Planning

ILO - International Labour Organization

ITUC - International Trade Union Confederation

HRM - Human Resource Management

PAS - Personnel and Administrative Service

IRS - Industrial Relations Services

HRDS - Human Resource Development Services

CPRS - Communication and Public Relations Services

HRMO - Human Resource Main Office

LAS - Legal Affairs Services

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The economic benefits of education have often been studied in the framework of human capital theory (Becker, 1964; Mincer, 1974). Many studies provide empirical estimates of the returns for individuals from an investment in education. Another strand of the literature attempts to establish and measure the causal link between investment in education and economic growth at national economy level. But to translate from individual benefits into national economic growth, the effects of educational investment have to appear at the level of firms and economic sectors. The way education investments influence, for instance, productivity and firm or sector growth, is one of the essential ways in which they translate into economic growth, along with other channels such as the development of social capital or health outcomes.

The specific role of VET is particularly relevant for firms and economic sectors. One can expect that general education affects national economic growth substantially through ‘soft’ variables such as social capital, whereas VET has a more direct influence on productivity, and hence on economic benefits which are measurable at company or sector level.

The benefits of investment in vocational education and training (VET) for firms have been the object of several studies. To date, most studies on the economic

benefits of education have used either general variables, such as the number of years spent in initial education, or specific data about training of employees. However, when looking at economic benefits of education at company or sector level, a difference should be made between general and vocational initial education, and measures of training should be included to enable a comparison between the benefits of different types of VET. Knowledge about which kind of training brings the greatest returns, and upon which factors these returns depend is valuable for the future of economic sectors and firms.

The question about the economic benefits of VET to firms and economic sectors is of great practical relevance. At company level, better information about the returns on investment in VET is a useful tool for decision-makers. At sector level, actors involved in the organization and financing of VET (business organizations, social partners, the State) need to know the extent and nature of the benefits of VET to organize its provision efficiently. In this research, the impact of VET on company performance was investigated, using the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) Head Office Bota Limbe as case study.

The Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) started as a German trading firm. The Bimbia division of Mabeta estate of today is what was known as the Woermann firm and the present Idenau was known as Jantzen and Thormalen firm. The Germans however bought and had them under their custody for 21 years, as the Second World War broke out and the plantations once more became part of the custodian of enemy property.

In 1946, a bill was passed by the Nigerian legislative council establishing the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC). This brought an end to the possession of the plantations as part of the enemy property. In 1947, the CDC was actually born with Mr. Smith as chairperson of the corporation. The Corporation at that time got its funds by borrowing from the Nigerian government and the Barclays bank of London (presently known as BICEC bank) and the Colonial Development Corporation (commonwealth) subsequently the other states such as the Ndu tea and Djutuitsa tea were opened and these laid the foundation of CDC we have today. The CDC from 1947 –present has had three Cameroonians as general managers with the present one making four.

-Mr. John NibaNgu(GM) 1947-1988

-Mr. Peter MafanyMusonge (GM) 1988-1998

-Mr. Henry NjallaQuan (GM) 1998-2012

-Mr. Franklin NgoniIkomeNjie(GM) 2012-present.

1.1.1 Aims and Objectives of CDC

The Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) is an agro-industrial complex company which has existed since 1947. However, its history dates back to the colonial period with the German annexation of Cameroon. CDC is 100 % state owned. The corporation grows 3 main tropical crops namely Rubber, Palm oil and Banana in the Littoral and South West Region. It has 18 estates with the Head Office in Bota Limbe. The corporation also provides environmental and social amenities to workers and their dependents, government officials and neighboring villages.

In 2010, its plantation covered a total area of 36,429 hectares under cultivation. CDC is the second largest employer in Cameroon after the state with a total workforce of approximately 22,000 workers including casual and contract workers.

The CDC is aimed at developing the corporation by expanding its plantations to many other parts of the country. They also aimed at developing Cameroon and reducing the rate of unemployment. Their growth has been expanded to different parts of the country like Nkambe, Mamfe, and Boa which will actually lead to the development of the various areas.

1.1.2 Corporation's Resources

The operation of the corporation or budgeted for, this takes place during budgeting preparation which is defended before the board of directors and when approved it is executed piece meal under general manager's approval or defended by the end uses.

1.1.3 Structure of the organization

Structure here refers to the way the CDC is organized in order to achieve its goals of creation. Social structure, as stated by the functionalist Talcott Parsons and Hebert Spencer in their theory refers to management of persons within an institution in order to ensure continuity. According to Radcliff Brown in the theory of structural functionalism, social structure means the arrangement of a group or organization in the functioning and maintenance or survival of the whole society. The case of the CDC, the structure is strictly hierarchal which is followed and respected at all levels.

The organization chart of this corporation shows all the different departments of the CDC and their sub-departments or units. It also shows the line of authority flowing from the board of directors to the general manager who is the head of the entire corporation and is appointed by presidential decree.

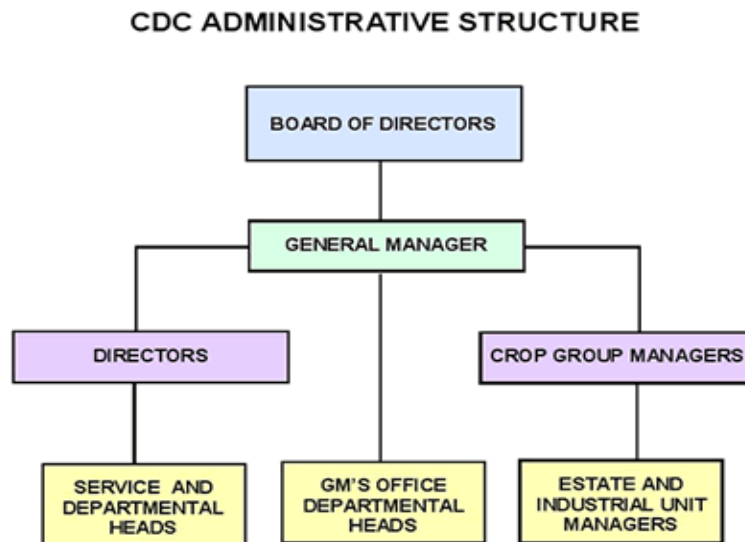


Figure 1.1: CDC Administrative Structure

Source: Personelle and Administrative Service Office

1.1.4 Decision Making

Following the hierarchy nature of the corporation a junior worker cannot take a decision without consulting his/her immediate boss, it however goes thus:

General Manager

Director Human Resource/Crop Group Manager

Estate Managers (Banana, Palms And Rubber Estate)

Senior Field Assistants (Banana, Palms And Rubber Estate)

Junior Field Assistant (Banana, Palms And Rubber Estate)

Overseers (Banana, Palms And Rubber Estate)

Headmen/Women (Banana, Palms And Rubber Estate)

General Labour (Weeders, Harvesters, Tapers)

It however moves from up to down when information is to be passed in the corporation and down to up in case of any information. The movement is done in a respective or chronological manner. You cannot by pass your immediate boss to another; it will be violation of the internal rules of the corporation.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

VET is a direct means of providing workers with skills more relevant to the evolving needs of the employers and the economy. Therefore, it should be a priority for companies in order to enhance their productivity. However, most employers do not want to invest in the process because they see it as a cost rather than an investment. Some employers even tend to hire the wrong people for particular jobs because of the demands of those with the necessary backgrounds and qualifications needed to perform a particular job. As a result, productivity and development of the company suffers in the long run.

In the case of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), it is a technical oriented company. But the challenge, I think lies in the cost of VET and the perception of the company about how useful VET is. This work is in any means seeking to highlight the importance of VET for employers of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) Bota Limbe.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Main Objective

The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of VET on company performance.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives include:

- ❖ To identify the positive impact of VET.
- ❖ To identify if the levels of performance of individuals in the company vary according to the level of VET.
- ❖ To identify whether VET guarantees the employability of workers.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main Research Question

The overall research question was formulated as follows: ‘Does VET have a positive impact on the company’s performance?’

Specific Research Questions

- ❖ Does VET have a positive impact on company performance?
- ❖ Does the level of performance of the individuals in the company vary according to the level or size of VET?
- ❖ Does VET guarantee employability?

This study is devoted to answering these questions, by analyzing the results of extensive literature about the effects of VET on the economic performance of companies.

1.5 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The main or overall hypothesis of the study is that VET has an impact on the company’s performance.

The hypothesis has been broken down into specific parts which can also be seen as follows:

H1 VET has a positive impact on company performance.

H2 The levels of performances of the individuals in the company vary according to the level of VET.

H3 VET guarantees the employability of workers.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope here will involve the coastal region of Cameroon, Limbe in Fako Region, the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) head office Bota-Limbe to be more precise. The Cameroon development corporation is located at the coastal region of Cameroon at the foot of Mount Fako. It is a parastatal company owned by the state of Cameroon. Currently, its plantations cover a total of approximately 41,000 Hectares of land, 38,000 Hectares of which is mature and of production stage. The corporation constitutes a workforce of close to 22,000 employees including temporal workers, making it the second highest employer after the state of Cameroon.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Although the field of education has made progress in the past ten years, this less regulated area of the education sector (VET) seems to have lost its importance. This has led to a widening gap between the supply and demand for skilled manpower across various industries. This study seeks to sensitize employers as well as employees on the importance and impact that VET can have on both the company and its workers.

The aim of every organization is to outweigh its competitors in terms of rendering better services to its customers to enable the company sustain in the market. The company cannot do without having well trained employees who can help the organization to achieve its aims and objectives.

With regards to the employers, they will be able to understand that the process of recruitment is made easier because the Human Resource team will know exactly what to look for in a candidate. They will have a clear idea of the skills that candidates must possess and those that can be relaxed because the company offers training programs in those areas. This can give the employees the impression that they have an opportunity to learn on the job and take up new responsibilities.

It is also anticipated that the findings of the study will pave way for the authorities of CDC Bota Limbe to accept the factors that influence managerial behavior and its impact on employees towards organizational performance.

1.8 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

This study is made of Five Chapters and is grouped as follows:

Chapter one covers at the general introduction of the work which includes the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, research hypotheses, scope of the study, significance of the study and the outline of the study. Chapter two is concerned with the review of existing literature which covers the conceptual framework, empirical framework and theories on vocational education and training (VET). Chapter three deals with the methodology adopted for the study. Issues to be covered include research design, population and sample size, sample techniques, instrumentation, mode of data collection and method of data analysis, Chapter Four which is the main Chapter of the study presents findings and discussions based on the analysis made. The final chapter, Chapter Five summarises the findings, a general conclusion of the research, recommendations and indications for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

VET is important as it enriches a person for life and provides the competences which are necessary for self and social development. Societal and economic development depends on the strength of VET as it provides access to skills and entry routes into the labor market. For under-privileged and marginalized groups in particular, it can be an important route towards a better life.

The sheer size of the VET sector in some parts of the world should confirm its importance. Even though there exist huge problems in terms of data collection, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) has found that in both Europe and Oceania, more than sixty percent of pupils in upper secondary education, weighted by school-age population, are enrolled in VET programs, with the rest of the world hovering around ten percent (UIS, 2006,). As VET is provided at almost all levels of education, the real numbers of students in the sector are probably much higher in actual fact.

2.1 MEANING AND SCOPE OF VET

Defining VET as a sector within the education system poses a number of difficulties. For the most part, general and academic education is seen as that which builds analytical skills, knowledge and critical thinking, while VET develops craftsmanship, practical experience and practical problem-solving. However, this simple distinction does not hold up to scrutiny. Critical thinking and analytical skills are needed in the case of a good plumber or electrician who must routinely make judgments in order to solve problems. Equally, a good surgeon needs a large set of practical skills to masterfully operate a patient. These simple distinctions can also lead to confusion and academic drift of vocational institutions (cf. Neave, 1978) or a vocationalisation of higher education (cf. Williams, 1985). In this section, different approaches to defining VET are discussed and suggestions are made on how EI can take the issue of definition forward.

Although seemingly abstract, the discussion on what VET constitutes is first of all a practical discussion. A question of definition leads to further questions of the place where VET is provided, who VET students are, who VET teachers are and crucially for EI, under which types of conditions such teachers work.

VET is offered at different levels of educational systems and in a variety of educational institutions. Chappel (2003) makes this very clear, noting that in Australia VET is provided by:

- Educational institutions including schools, TAFE (Technical and Further Education) colleges, Adult and Community Education (ACE) and universities;
- Public, private and non-government providers of education and training;
- Industry, in-house and organization-specific training; and
- Small business and private training consultants.

2.1.1 VET and Development

The industrialized world invests more in vocational schooling than the developing world. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) finds a simple correlation between the two, as ‘the greater a country’s Gross Domestic Product per capita, the greater its secondary Percentage of Technical/Vocational Enrolment’ (UIS, 2006). However, surprisingly, there is little in the relevant literature to support the link between VET and development. With a few exceptions, the standard conclusion is that it is wiser for governments to invest in general education than in VET. This line of reasoning has been set on the pretext of ‘the vocational school fallacy’ – a term coined by Foster when researching the externalities of Western education reform in Ghana in 1965.

A second influential strand of work originates from authors linked to the World Bank, who argue that while VET can be important for growing economies, the organization of VET should be minimal, with strong private sector involvement

both in terms of organizing supply and creating demand. A third factor is the EFA agenda, which according to some made ‘VET fall from grace’ (McGrath, 2002).

As targets have been set for many education sectors - but not for VET - concerns over this sector, have nearly disappeared from the international development agenda. The discussion below critically examines these three approaches to VET.

2.1.2 The Vocational School ‘Fallacy’

King and Martin (2002) explain the VET ‘fallacy’ as a challenge between planning and reality. Foster’s main message was that youth in Africa had already quite rationally decided in the sixties – despite all types of attempts to change their attitude - that an academic education would be better for achieving their goals and improving their position than vocational schooling. Thus while policy could have had many noble goals in trying to improve the situation of socially and economically disadvantaged people, the actual attitudes and behavior of young people may not match these goals, as was the case in Africa, according to Foster. Foster’s conclusions were based on a study of perceptions of young Ghanaian males on their future prospects and education opportunities.

Although several methodological points are made and the mitigating effects of schools on society are recognized, King and Martin’s (2002) survey still concludes

that ‘Foster’s message today as in 1963 remains relevant for any attempts to use schools to deliver massive changes in attitude and aspiration in the absence of any parallel initiatives in the larger economic environment’ (King and Martin, 2002). Oketch (2007) is more critical of the fallacy, claiming that it does not have to apply today, as vocational education is seen as training which forms the basis for future training, not as a way to facilitate job entry, but as a way to facilitate vocational-specific skills over a lifetime. He argues that VET in Africa needs to be reformed to train for what he calls ‘higher skills’ linking better with the informal sector (Oketch, 2007). It is however clear that the ‘fallacy’ continues to influence policymakers today, making them skeptical about the need for VET.

2.1.3 The World Bank and VET

An influential World Bank publication entitled ‘Skills for Productivity’ (Middleton et al., 1993) attempts to historically track the impact VET on economic development, to vocational school fallacy is taken as the point of departure, although significantly more research material is analysed. The position of the World Bank is interesting, as it has funded many VET projects in the past.

From 1963 to 1976, more than half of World Bank-assisted investments in the educational systems of developing countries supported vocational education or training. Two-thirds of this investment was made in middle-income countries. Similar patterns persisted well into the 1980s, not only for the World Bank, but

also for the investment programs of the Asian, African, and Inter-American Development Banks.

The dilemma that gives rise to the mentioned World Bank study is that developing nations are faced with a dual problem while developing strategies for increasing the access to ‘middle-level skills’. This dual problem is to improve productivity under severe resource constraints and respond to high demands of public education and training resources, including improving access to, and quality of, basic education. Therefore, the results of VET should be seen in the context of other investments as well. The authors take note of the above-mentioned problems of definition, combined with a lack of data, concluding that due to such problems ‘it is not surprising that the attempts to examine VET’s contribution to economic growth have been unsuccessful’. However this does not stop them from drawing far-reaching conclusions.

The authors then define three critical dimensions which can make VET cost-effective as a strategy:

When it is focused on improving productivity, when jobs are available, and when it produces workers with needed skills of acceptable quality. Understanding the economic context in which training is delivered is therefore critical to the development of effective training policies and programs’.

Not surprisingly, these are also the points of departure of the World Bank policy paper on VET, which was written two years earlier by the same authors. The policy paper focuses on four main strategies to improve VET provision, namely: strengthening primary and secondary education; encouraging private sector training; improving effectiveness and efficiency in public training; and training and equity strategies (World Bank, 1991). It is hard to pinpoint one clear message from the policy paper, as some messages can be seen as being in conflict with one another. On the one hand, the policy is critical of the role of public providers, identifying problems of rigid planning and management, weak linkages to employers, inappropriate objectives and inadequate financing. On the other hand, it stresses that there should be a role for the state in compensating for market distortions in wage policy, capturing external benefits, offsetting weak private training capacity and improving equity.

It is perhaps then that the role of the state that is envisaged is the one usually played by the British state as explained above, being more of a mediator than a strong regulator. However this is a point that raises quite some controversy. Bennell (1996), in a critical article on the World Bank's involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa, argues as follows:

Perhaps the most critical issue is the largely irresolvable tension that exists between the Bank's obvious desire to promote its demand-driven VET reforms and the feasibility of actually implementing this agenda in developing countries and especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The continuation of such a dirigiste role for the state does not sit comfortably with its essentially voluntaristic and supportive role

envisaged in the VETSPP [VET Policy Paper]. Not surprisingly, therefore, this dilemma is likely to seriously limit the Bank's own (operational) room for manoeuvre.

Several other authors, also linked to the World Bank, have published similar material. In these articles, the stand on VET is slightly more positive, although the discourse remains the same. Psacharopoulos (2006), writing about two decades of education policy in the World Bank, argues that the Bank is not against VET but against VET provision in general schools rather than in dedicated vocational schools.

Tzannathos and Johnes (1997), writing about training and skills development in East Asia, do partially attribute economic growth in the region to role of VET. They explain how the model that these countries have used is one largely built on the private sector. For example, in Singapore, training levies are paid through a 1 percent tax imposed on companies using the wages paid to low-paid workers as the tax-base. They conclude that the: 'low social rates of return to vocational education and the high rates observed in the case of in-service training suggest that the fundamental question in skills development is not whether to vocationalise schools but at what stage [to do so] in the education process'. Thus, once again, the value and contribution of VET is not entirely put aside, provided that VET is organized within the discourse of privatization and competition.

2.1.4 VET and Education For All (EFA)

The policies above-described above are not very well-suited to the general line of thinking adopted in the Education For All (EFA) agenda. The 2009 Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2009) is quite hostile towards the agenda of ‘choice, competition and voice’, arguing that competition and choice have the potential to reinforce inequality. Moreover, when Ministers met in Seoul in 1999 at the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) they adopted the goal of ‘Technical and

Vocational Education for All” stating:

TVE is one of the most powerful instruments for enabling all members of the community to face new challenges and to find their roles as productive members of society. It is an effective tool for achieving social cohesion, integration and self-esteem (UNESCO, 1999).

At the same time, however, it can be questioned how the EFA agenda, adopted in Dakar in 2000, does contribute to VET. Goal three – ‘to promote learning and skills for young people and adults’ – is the only goal that addresses some aspects of VET. The goal is not very concrete and it is certainly not as strong as the 1999 Seoul conclusions. Consequently it interpreted in many different ways (UNESCO, 2009). This could perhaps be the reason why VET is not mentioned in the Global Monitoring Report. However it could also be said that the focus on primary

education in the EFA goals is likely to be the reason behind governments' distraction from developing proper strategies for VET.

The dilemma, described already by the World Bank, is made quite visible in a study by the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) for the World Bank by Atchoarena and Delluc (2001) on VET in Sub-Saharan Africa. They explain that in Malawi, where 90 percent of the population dwelling is rural, the government has been preoccupied with meeting international goals of expanding basic education rather than developing a TVET system which matches the kind of rural life that the majority lead. Similar reasons surface in Algeria, Lesotho, Chad and Senegal where TVET figures are either less than 2 percent or are just slightly above it but not reaching the 3 percent level (Atchoarena and Delluc, 2001). McGrath, in an attempt to formulate a new skills agenda for development, goes a little further by claiming that the absence of language of skills in international targets increases the likelihood of reduced attention for VET. Moreover, the reduction in emphasis on skills-development in cooperation activities is not consistent with OECD governments' own programmes and policies at home (McGrath, 2002). Finally, Oketch is again more critical, stating that 'nowhere is TVET mentioned and, or even when it is mentioned, it is not in the agenda of international community or the national governments to finance' (Oketch, 2007).

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In an analysis of the emergence of VET in the United States, Venn (1964) explains the etymology of the term ‘vocational’ as a sort of ‘calling’. He refers to it as education aiming at a stable job and a stable career in a recognized profession, pinpointing its emergence somewhere in the 19th century industrial revolution. However, in more recent times, this cannot be said to apply. Societal institutions – religious, political cultural, economic and social – which were once based on permanency were subsequently caught up in the twentieth century trend of ‘change’. As the reasons for VET did not remain obvious over time, its status started to be put in question. Indeed, much of the literature on VET focuses on the lack of a clear definition of the term ‘vocational’.

Stevenson (2005), researching on VET in Australia remarks that ‘wherever one looks, the place for the vocational appears to be similar – the vocational is at the bottom of a hierarchy of knowledge and value, it is a stream of learning available to the “lower achiever”, it is governed in a paternalistic way with highly circumscribed degrees of freedom over content and process, it is legitimated solely in industrial and other utilitarian terms, rather than in the connections among different kinds of meaning making, and it is preserved for occupations of lower status’. Instead, Stevenson adopts a view from John Dewey in that a ‘vocation means nothing but such a direction of life activities as renders them perceptibly significant to a person, because of the consequences they accomplish, and also useful to his associates’. However, while such a definition does raise the status of what ‘vocational’ is, it does not solve the practical problem of difficulties in being

able to identify VET provision in certain institutions. In such an approach, vocationalism is important for all types of studies. Indeed, even for academics, meaning to their own work often arises in application.

Moodie (2002) analyses existing definitions in four dimensions - epistemological, teleological, hierarchical and pragmatic. He argues that a definition is needed on all four levels, stating that ‘one may consider vocational education and training to be the development and application of knowledge and skills for middle-level occupations needed by society from time to time’. Such a pragmatic definition seems to match the approach of UNESCO in its Revised Recommendation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), giving preference to the term ‘technical and vocational education and training’ over the term ‘vocational education and training’. The mentioned recommendation states that ‘technical and vocational education’ is ‘used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life’ (UNESCO, 2001).

2.2.1 Government Policy Imperatives for VET

If one definition of VET is given importance over another, this might lead to some forms of provision being left out or given more importance than others. It is also a matter of political importance to consider how VET is positioned in relation to the

rest of the education system. For instance, in relation to the debate on the relation between gender inequalities and VET, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) concludes that it is difficult to draw conclusions on whether VET contributes to gender inequalities. It notes that the issue is complex and likely to vary greatly across regions and countries. It is further made clear that there is both over-representation and under-representation of girls in different countries (UIS, 2006). However, Oketch (2007), who writes about the question of vocationalisation in Africa, is more critical stating: ‘... the gender inequalities that have persisted in the general programmes are also prevalent in the TVET programmes. But where the picture seems improved in terms of female participation, TVET is relegated to a less prestigious strand of education. It is really a double loss for girls in such cases’). Oketch’s conclusions are plausible, as in Africa, the VET sector is often small and offered at lower levels.

Another approach to this political problem comes directly from the role of the state, in relation to how the labour market should be organized. As VET is an intended bridge between education and the labour market, broader visions are important for the design of a VET system. Clarke and Winch (2007) trace different definitions of VET back to the historical context of the nation-state. They contrast the German and French systems with the British system. In the former two systems, the state is instrumental in setting a politically-defined programme of VET, in the structuring of the labour market and in determining relations between capital and labour. By contrast, in Britain, the state’s role is simply one of governance or supervision, thus introducing new sets of rules or laws, resulting in an apparent or real fragmentation of relations between labour and capital, often arbitrarily linked to state institutions and thus unresponsive or unpredictably

responsive to local or state policies. Consequently, the authors conclude that the British VET model is less one of state intervention and more of social injustice (Clarke and Winch 2007). It is not hard to imagine that the vision of the state towards the labour market then defines - to a large part - how VET is organized, who pays, where it is provided and who benefits from it.

Thus, it must be clear by now that a definition of VET is ultimately political, as it involves the central questions of who gets what, when and how (Lasswell, 1936).

2.2.2 The Connection of VET with the Labour Market

While several issues have already been raised about the connection between VET and the labour market, a better understanding of this link remains necessary. For labour unions concerned with the agenda of decent work, this question is central. While general vocational education is important, a system that is disconnected from the world of work leads to undervalued skills or, even worse, unemployment. The ILO Recommendation Concerning Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning (ILO, 2004) departs from this reasoning, stating that members should ‘ensure that vocational education and training systems are developed and strengthened to provide appropriate opportunities for the development and certification of skills relevant to the labour market’ (ibid, III.f). Firstly, the organization of the link between VET and the labour market is important, where apprenticeships play an important role. Secondly, the content of

programmes is important, as it is a concern of some that employers have too much influence. From an international perspective however, it is hard to generalize about something as local as curricula. Instead, some points are made below on the methods of defining curricular content through so-called 'skills projections'.

In different countries, the transition from school to work is organized in different ways and related to different modes of production. Grollman and Rauner (2007) describe four models of organizing the school-to-work transition, which is associated with different types of problems. Systems differ depending on the significance assigned to the relative occupation, the organizing principle for labour markets, the company work organization and vocational training. The first model, 'Direct Transition' is based on the Japanese situation and does not contain an organised 'bridge' between school and employment. Rather, extra training is offered in independently-chosen employment in large companies, which offer training for their employees. This type of training is described as successful because of a high company loyalty and high work morale.

The second model, 'Hardly Regulated Transition', is based upon the typical situation in the UK, which arises to a lesser extent in Italy and Spain. The model is characterised by a relatively long and lightly regulated transition phase with extensive search and orientation processes for youths. It is accompanied by a high rate of youth unemployment and other social risk situations. Participation in training programmes is closely linked to entry in the employment system and commencement of gainful employment can be a temporary solution during one's search for a job.

The third model, 'Regulated Overlapping Transition', is based upon central European countries such as Austria, Switzerland and Germany and Denmark. The transition from school to work takes place via a regulated system of apprenticeship. The young person is a trainee, a student in a vocational school, as well as an employee working in a company with the status of an apprentice at the same time. Youth employment is low as vocational education acts as a bridge between the working world and the education system.

The fourth and final model, 'Shifted Transition', is based upon countries with a well-developed, school-based state-provided vocational training system. Completion of general education is followed by a vocationally-related or vocationally-oriented form of schooling. On completion of the vocational school, students usually acquire a state certificate for special subjects or a school occupation attained. School and work thus remain institutionally separate (Grollmann and Rauner, 2007).

2.2.2.1 Apprenticeship

'Apprenticeship' is a term from the Middle Ages, which can mean very different things. For the World Bank for example, the 'traditional' apprenticeship is offered by a small business owner, which is willing, for a fee, to teach a skill or trade that is in demand. The training period varies in length, depending upon the technical difficulty of the trade and how quickly apprentices master the body of skills. Such

apprenticeships are still found in North and West Africa and to a lesser extent in Latin America (Middleton et al, 1993, p.174). Such an apprenticeship is quite the opposite of what is described above, especially in the more regulated 'transitions'. In the latter situation, it is in the interest of the company to provide the apprenticeship when it is employing and giving a (modest) salary to the apprentice. The word 'apprenticeship' is therefore quite ambiguous. Ryan (1998), in an attempt to calculate the economic merits of apprenticeship, explains that the category ranges from the informal purely work-based learning-by-doing - which still predominates in developing countries - to formal structured programmes of general education and vocational preparation sponsored by large industrial firms in some advanced economies.

The OECD prefers the broader term 'workplace learning' to encompass all these things. For the OECD, there are many advantages to apprenticeship for all the parties involved - the individual, the company, the education system and the labour market more generally (OECD, 2009). This seems to match the positive conclusions by Ryan, who claims that apprenticeship is associated with moderate gains in subsequent employment for participants, particularly relative to job training and labour market programmes, but also relative to full-time vocational education. However, he finds that gains are not equal for men and women, as men seem to benefit more (Ryan, 1998).

However the OECD sees even more constraints to the apprenticeship. First of all, apprenticeships might not always fulfil student needs. Furthermore, there are also problems on the supply-side as firms might be more interested in productivity

gain than in providing a learning experience and might also be focused too much on firm specific skills (OECD, 2009).

2.2.3 Key Skills and Competences for the Labour Market

In Europe, the design of curricula and the planning of places available for learning are to some extent based upon large-scale economic analyses of ‘skills needs’. Such skills projections lead to ambitious conclusions and reports, bearing titles such as ‘Key Skills for the Knowledge Economy’ or ‘Les Métiers en 2015’. The European Centre for Vocational Education and Training (CEDEFOP) argues that this development is continuing as ‘recent economic developments, decreasing supply of skills due to demographic change and increasingly felt shortages of workforce in many [EU] Member States have become an important push factor in developing systems for early identification of skills’ (CEDEFOP, 2008). These skills projections are based on a multiplicity of methods, both quantitative and semi-quantitative, such as econometric forecasting models or alumni surveys. Moreover, CEDEFOP argues that labour unions can play an important role in such research in tripartite discussion models, for example in the setting of occupational standards in Poland, Hungary and Slovenia.

In the literature, skills projection models are not uncontroversial. The World Bank is the biggest enemy of ‘manpower requirements forecasting’, stating that the models are based on wrong assumptions on economic behavior. For the Bank, the relationship between labour and the quantity of goods produced and between labour

productivity and the level of education are not fixed. Another challenge that it identifies is that there are also methodological problems, as it is hard to find the right information (cf. Middleton et al, 1993). A final fundamental concern is that the skills projections are likely to be more inaccurate if they project further into the future. However, at the same time, a long-term future projection will always be needed if the education system is to be reformed in some way. Before the first generation of students finishes in new programmes, a few years would already have passed before the policy will have had time to produce the desired effect. In the meantime, labour market needs might have already drastically changed.

2.2.4 Insight from The Human Capital Theory

According to human capital theory (Mincer, 1962; Becker, 1962), education and training bring benefits in higher productivity and higher wages. The theory predicts that workers bear the costs of ‘general’ education and training and that the benefits completely accrue to them. Workers and share the costs and benefits of specific training. Within this context ‘general’ means that the skills and competences acquired in education and training can be used in several firms and perhaps even several sectors. Specific training provides competences that are company-specific. So, part of VET will generate general human capital and training may be partly or wholly company-specific. However, vocational education may also be partly company-specific. This is particularly true for dual forms of vocational education in which students spend most of their time working for a firm. According to human

capital theory, vocational education may bring profits to firms, although some of the benefits will accrue to the students/workers.

However, even if VET were to be completely ‘general’, firms may benefit from it. Human capital theory, in its original form, lacks some important features. Owing to market imperfections and risk aversion, individuals may be reluctant to invest in ‘general’ education and training. In practice, both the State and private companies bear part of the costs of ‘general’ education and training, including VET. Firms may particularly invest in apprenticeship and continuous training. This implies that the benefits will only partly accrue to workers and that education and training, and particularly VET, may also bring positive returns for companies. Therefore, VET will not only have an impact on productivity, but also on profitability.

The benefits of training for firms can appear in a wide range of other forms of economic performance. First, education and training may have external effects through innovation and spill-over. This is emphasized by the new growth theories (Barro and Sala-I-Martin, 1995). New knowledge and competences embodied in higher educated workers are often transferred to other workers. The same is true for new knowledge that is embedded in new products. A higher share of workers with a VET background may be favourable for innovation and knowledge transfer. Owing to the external effects involved, benefits will not, or only partly, accrue to workers.

Similarly, if VET adds to the skills of workers this may also affect product quality positively. If VET has a stronger impact on product quality and productivity than on wage costs, it will improve competitiveness.

Third, there are not always enough people with the required education to fill labour demand. Young people may choose education based on the current labour market situation, but later, after completing their education, find out that the situation has changed. One might argue that some forms of VET, particularly apprenticeship and continuous training, avoid such a mismatch (or reduce existing mismatch), because the training takes place in the firm and is directly related to its needs.

Although VET may have the positive effects mentioned, this is still no more than a hypothesis that needs testing. Much research has already been done on the effects on the individual firm. We analyze the results of this research and the background to the conclusions.

2.2.4.1 Determinants of the effect of VET on company performance

Different studies about the effect of VET on company economic performance will find different effects. The aim of this literature review and meta-analysis is to find out in which cases VET has a positive influence on company development. It is, therefore, important to have in mind which factors can have an influence on the estimated effect of VET. These factors can be characteristics of the object of study

itself (the firm, the particular training and particular performance chosen). They can also be embedded in the study methodology.

First, the estimated effect of VET will be related to characteristics of the firm, such as size and sector. The country in which the firms studied are located may also influence the results, because of differences in institutional context.

Second, characteristics of the VET are also relevant: the effects of IVET and CVET on company performance would be expected to be different. The effect of VET is also likely to differ across different forms of training (classroom, on-the-job, internal or external), and across different contents or fields of training (e.g. language training, computer training, sales training). The group at which the training is directed is also relevant, because training effectiveness generally differs for people of different age groups and with different educational backgrounds.

The measure of performance chosen as dependent variable in the analysis will also influence the estimated effect of VET. It is to be expected that the effects of VET will not be the same on productivity, profitability, innovation and capacity so it is important to differentiate between studies which focus on different performance indicators.

Finally, the context in which VET is embedded can also play a role in its effectiveness. There is a body of literature investigating whether training is more

effective when integrated in more general HRM practices such as quality circles. The influence of such factors on the estimated effects of VET will be examined.

2.2.4.2 Role of Human Resource Management (HRM) Context

The hypothesis at the basis of this study is that investing in VET leads to positive returns for firms. Such returns, however, are likely to depend on the context in which the training takes place: VET embedded in more general human resource practices might be expected to amplify its effects. Appropriate HRM practices can improve employee motivation and identification with the employer company, and, therefore, their willingness to learn and to use what they learned in their work.

The idea behind the hypothesis - that HRM practices increase employee motivation and, therefore, performance - is that workers are not just ‘rational egoists’, but that their behaviour is also influenced by feelings of belonging and loyalty. Identity economics (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; 2010) states that worker utility is not affected positively simply by the wage they receive and negatively by the effort they have to make to receive the wage. Identity-utility also plays a role, in the sense that if workers identify themselves with the organization they work in, i.e. if they derive higher identity-utility from their work, they will need less monetary incentive to do their job well. Employers can mobilize these feelings to enhance worker commitment, in general, and in particular to ensure the success of an investment such as training (Cedefop, 2011b).

There are various mechanisms through which HRM practices, and training in particular, can mobilize feelings of loyalty and belonging among employees. Firms can pay more than the market wage to stimulate employees to effort that is higher than that strictly required by their formal function requirements. Investing in training a worker can be considered as the equivalent to an above-market wage. This can be seen as a form of efficiency wage, or a ‘gift exchange’ between employer and employee (Akerlof, 1984). In this case, employees view the training as a gift from their employer and feel that they have to react by ‘giving’ their employer full commitment and effort. One way to conceptualize this higher commitment of workers is ‘organizational citizenship behaviour’ (Organ, 1988). This means that employees act in the interest of the organization they work for on their own initiative and that they do more than their formal obligations.

Training being perceived as a gift, as something which triggers commitment to the organization, seems more likely in a context in which much attention is paid to the ‘human factor’ in the firm and to the relationship of employees to their employer. This leads to the hypothesis that VET will have greater effect when embedded in better developed HRM practices.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives a detailed discussion or explanation on the methods used in conducting the research. It includes, research design, population of study, sample and sampling, sources of data collection, method of data collection, method of data presentation and analysis. This is necessary and important as every scientific work must be systematic to enable other researchers to study the work and extract ideas.

3.1 MODEL SPECIFICATION

This study on the impact of vocational education and training on company performance in the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) Head Office Bota Limbe followed a systematic methodology that helped in achieving the research objectives and also to test the hypotheses. The data obtained was analyzed using social statistical techniques and tables. These tables will be seen in the next chapter (Chapter 4). Different techniques or methods of data collection were also used.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design considered appropriate for this study is the survey research design, particularly the sample survey. This is a design in which a group of people or items are representatives. A portion of the accessible population will be used and the results will be applicable to the entire population. The research shall report data both on already existing information and unknown information which will be gotten through questionnaires from the employees of CDC Bota Limbe.

3.3 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study is all employees of CDC. The target population of here refers to all the workers of the CDC Head Office Bota Limbe.

The sample population is made up of those elements in the population which are within the reach of the researcher. The sample population here includes the workers of the various services of the Human Resource Department. These services are as follows:

- Personnel and Administrative Services (PAS)
- Industrial Relations Services (IRS)
- Human Resource Development Services (HRDS)

- Communication and Public Relations Services (CPRS)
- Human Resource Main Office (HRMO)
- Legal Affairs Services (LAS)

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A sample is that proportion of elements drawn from the accessible population through a specific procedure. This is a proportion of the population that is studied. The sample of this study is made up 30 personnel or workers from the various services of the Human Resource Department of the CDC Head Office Bota Limbe.

In selecting workers to fill in the questionnaires, the purposeful sampling technique was used where only some workers from the Human Resource Department were given questionnaires.

3.5 COLLECTION OF DATA

Data collected for this study is classified into two types; the primary sources and secondary sources.

Primary sources are those collected directly from the source or accessible population. The primary source used in the collection of data was the questionnaires. They were closed ended. The answers were provided for respondents to either answer “YES” or “NO”. The questions were asked following the variables of study. This source of data collection is known as the research instrument. Another primary source of data collection was the use of informal discussions with the personnel or workers during working hours.

Luma, Mbangwana, defined a questionnaire as a carefully written outset of questions about a particular subject that is given to a carefully selected sample of human beings. During the construction of the questionnaire, due consideration was given to the objectives, hypothesis, grammar as well as related Literature of the study. These conditions were considered because they are conditions that can influence the responses of the respondents in any research questionnaire.

Secondary data were obtained from existing document on official correspondence records; official text, journal, works of other researchers, articles from newspapers; magazines as well as search engines like Google and Google Scholar were also used in the study.

3.6 METHOD OF DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES

Descriptive statistics and particularly percentages will be used to present the data of the findings in the questionnaires; inferential statistics will be used to draw conclusions on the findings. Also tables will be used to illustrate or show the average responses in percentages.

Formula for percentages = Total observed frequency / Total expected frequency x 100/1

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND LIMITATIONS

In order to attain a dependable solution to problems in this study, there must be a well-planned and systematic presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Data collected in the field was presented and analyzed in relation to the hypothesis and objectives of the study. It is on this basis that a conclusion was drawn.

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES

Data for this study was obtained mainly from questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered to 30 workers from the CDC Head Office Bota Limbe. These workers were selected from six services within the Human Resource Department which are:

- Personnel and Administrative Services (PAS)
- Industrial Relations Services (IRS)
- Human Resource Development Services (HRDS)
- Communication and Public Relations Services (CPRS)
- Human Resource Main Office (HRMO)
- Legal Affairs Services (LAS)

The responses that were collected using questionnaires are presented in tables. Brief analyses are made under each table.

4.1.1 Hypothesis one / Research question one

From table 4.1 below, responses to question 1 show that out of 30 employees from all six services put together, all 30 (100%) of them agreed with the fact that VET has an impact on company performance.

Regarding question 2, 23 (77%) of the employees said that the impact VET has on company performance is a positive one whereas 7 (23%) of them disagreed with the fact that VET has a positive impact on company performance.

Furthermore, for question 3, 25 (83%) of the employees are said to have undergone VET at some point in their career while the other 5 (17%) have not.

Lastly, the employees were asked in question 4 if they see VET as an investment for the company or a cost. 23 (77%) of them viewed VET as an investment whereas the other 7 (23%) employees viewed VET as a cost for the company.

Table 4.1: Opinions regarding the positive impact of VET on company performance.

| Numbers | Questions | Answers | Frequencies | Percentages |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | In your opinion, does vocational education and training (VET) have an impact on company performance? | Yes No Total | 30 00 30 | 100% 0% 100% |
| 2 | Is this impact a positive one? | Yes No Total | 23 07 30 | 77% 23% 100% |
| 3 | Have you undergone any form of VET? | Yes No Total | 25 05 30 | 83% 17% 100% |
| 4 | Do you see VET as an investment or a cost for the company? | Investment Cost Total | 23 07 30 | 77% 23% 100% |

Source: Established from questionnaires.

4.1.2 Hypothesis two / Research question two

From table 4.2 below, responses to question 1 show that out of 30 employees from all six services sampled, 25 (83%) of them said their performances at work had improved as a result of VET while 5 (17%) of them disagrees with the fact.

As regards question 2, 9 (30%) of them agreed with the fact that their colleagues and them perform a particular job the same. On the contrary, 21 (70%) of them said they do not perform a job the same as other employees.

Furthermore, for question 3, 22 (73%) of the employees agreed with the fact that the length of VET does have a significance on their performances and that of their colleagues. The other 8 (27%) employees said the length of VET has no significance on their performances or that of the other employees.

Lastly, in question 4, 22 (73%) of the workers agreed with the fact that the level of performances of workers vary with the level or size of VET whereas 8 (27%) of the employees had a contrary view.

Table 4.2: Opinion showing the relationship between the level of VET and the level of performance of individuals.

| Numbers | Questions | Answers | Frequencies | Percentages |
|----------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Would you say your work performance has improved as a result of VET? | Yes No Total | 25 05 30 | 83% 17% 100% |
| 2 | Do you and your other colleagues perform a particular job the same way? | Yes No Total | 09 21 30 | 30% 70% 100% |
| 3 | Does the length of VET have any significance on the performances of you and your colleagues? | Yes No Total | 22 08 30 | 73% 27% 100% |
| 4 | Would you therefore say that the level of performance of the workers vary with the level or size of VET? | Yes No Total | 22 08 30 | 73% 27% 100% |

Source: Established from questionnaires.

4.1.3 Hypothesis three / Research question three

From table 4.3, answers from question 1 show that out of 30 workers sampled, 21 (70%) of them said they are satisfied with their jobs whereas the other 9 (30%) said they are not happy with their jobs.

Following question 2, all of the 30 (100%) employees who were sampled from the different services said they perform their jobs to the required level.

Furthermore, in question 3, workers were asked if their performances were as a result of the VET you have undergone. 22 (73%) of them said yes to this while the remaining 8 (27%) workers said no.

Also, for question 4, 25 (83%) of the employees said yes to the fact that VET guarantees their employability. The other 5 (17%) employees had a contrasting view and said no to the fact that VET guarantees employability.

Finally, regarding question 5, 25 (83%) workers said they would recommend VET to companies and their employees whereas the other 5 (17%) said they would not.

Table 4.3: Opinions showing whether VET guarantees employability.

| Numbers | Questions | Answers | Frequencies | Percentages |
|---------|--|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | As an employee, are you satisfied with your job? | Yes No | 21 09 | 70% 30% |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| | | Total | 30 | 100% |
| 2 | Do you think you perform your duties to the required level? | Yes No Total | 30 00 30 | 100% 00% 100% |
| 3 | Is this performance as a result of the VET you have undergone? | Yes No Total | 22 08 30 | 73% 27% 100% |
| 4 | Would you therefore say that VET guarantees your employability? | Yes No Total | 25 05 30 | 83% 17% 100% |
| 5 | Would you recommend VET to companies as well as employees? | Yes No Total | 25 05 30 | 83% 17% 100% |

Source: Established from questionnaires.

4.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

First of all, the researcher was faced with the problem of time constraint due to the congested nature of the school programs. Hence, could not carry out an in-depth investigation of the problem.

Also, the financial constraint in carrying out this research project was a major problem. The cost of getting materials and information as well as their adequacies was a problem the researcher had to face.

Education and training are key contributors to the development of skills and knowledge. Typically, but not always, the latter are reflected in the award of some form of qualification or credential. It is these measured qualifications that are normally used to capture the human resource input into the production and growth process. Where such measures are not available, years of completed schooling are often used instead.

It is important to emphasize that the present review does not attempt to assess the precise values of the parameters reported, although it is concerned with the direction and strength of the relationships. The focus is more on the nature of the key indicators and the variables used in studies and the general nature of the relationships established.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. For research question 1, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is that VET has a positive impact on company performance, whereas the null hypothesis (Ho1) is that VET has no positive impact on company performance. The data collected with regard to these hypotheses revealed in table 4.1 that out of 30 employees from all six services put together, 23 (77%) of the employees said that the impact VET has on company performance is positive. Furthermore, 25 (83%) of the employees are said to have undergone VET at some point in their career. Lastly, 23 (77%) of them viewed VET as an investment. From the results, it can be confirmed that VET has a positive impact on company performance and should be viewed as an investment by the company on its employees as it pays off in the long term. Hence, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is retained and the null hypothesis (Ho1) is rejected.

2. For research question 2, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is that the levels of performances of the individuals in the company vary according to the level of VET, whereas the null hypothesis (Ho1) is that the levels of performances of the individuals in the company do not vary according to the level of VET. The data collected with regard to this hypothesis revealed in table 4.2 of

chapter 4 that out of 30 employees sampled, 25 (83%) of them said their performances at work had improved as a result of VET. 21 (70%) of them said they do not perform a job the same as other employees. Furthermore, 22 (73%) of them agree with the fact that the length of VET has a significance on their performances and that of their colleagues. Lastly, 22 (73%) of them agree with the fact that the level of performances of workers vary with the level or size of VET. From these results, it can be concluded that the levels of performances of the individuals in the company vary according to the level of VET. Employees with a higher level of VET tend to perform better than those with a lower level. Hence, the alternative hypothesis (H2) is retained and the null hypothesis (Ho2) is rejected.

3. For research question 3, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is that VET guarantees the employability of workers, whereas the null hypothesis (Ho1) is that VET does not guarantee the employability of workers. Data collected with regard to this hypothesis revealed in table 4.3 that out of 30 workers sampled, 21 (70%) of them said they are satisfied with their jobs. All of the 30 (100%) employees said they perform their jobs to the required level. Furthermore, 22 (73%) of them said yes to the fact that their performances were as a result of the VET they have undergone. 25 (83%) of them said yes to the fact that VET guarantees their employability. From these results, it can be concluded that VET guarantees the employability of workers. Employees with a level of VET will have no problems securing their jobs as well as finding other jobs because of their competence and mastery of a particular job. Hence, the alternative hypothesis (H3) is retained and the null hypothesis (Ho3) is rejected.

5.2: CONCLUSION

On the basis of the evidence collected, we can conclude that VET has a positive influence on the economic performance of firms. Most studies I examined found a positive and significant effect of VET. The average estimated effect of VET is positive. The characteristics of the object of study and the methodology used in it influence the magnitude of the effect found, but they do not generally put the overall result in question.

The positive effect of VET on company performance persists across performance indicators. Most studies I found concentrated on productivity. But for almost all performance indicators (quality, innovation, employment growth, multidimensional indicators), we find more studies concluding that VET has a positive effect than those finding the contrary. Only among those studies which look at profitability and firm costs, do most find an insignificant effect.

As clear as the conclusion about the positive effect of VET on company performance is, the evidence available to quantify the effects comparably across studies remains unclear. I came across a wide variety of performance indicators, VET indicators and model specifications that it is virtually impossible to translate each of the effects estimated into some variable which could be compared across studies. I have made an attempt to compute indicators of effect sizes as comparable as possible across studies, but the small number of valid entries obtained makes the results tentative.

5.3: RECOMMENDATIONS

In order for VET to play its part effectively in impacting the economic activities of companies across the country, there is an urgent need to redefine the critical elements of imparting vocational education to make them flexible, contemporary, relevant, inclusive and creative. Employers as well as the Government are well aware of the important role of VET and some have taken a number of initiatives. In order to strengthen these initiatives, the following long and short term strategies are recommended.

The first recommendation is for the Government to increase the flexibility of VET within the mainstream education system. This can be done through the following steps:

- Links should be established between the vocational education stream and school education as well as higher education.
- Courses devoted to certain skills training at the primary and secondary level should be introduced in all schools.
- Vocational training should be made available in various literacy and adult education schemes.
- Schemes for lifelong skill up-gradation, through short training programmes should be introduced.
- Courses in training institutes and polytechnics should have distinct tracks for students of different educational achievements.

Employers should endeavor to provide vocational training to individuals before and after employment. Opportunities for extending their technical and trade

knowledge by attending part time supplementary courses should be provided for all workers, whether or not they had received vocational training before entering employment. These courses should, as far as possible be held in establishments near to the place of employment or the workers' home. The time spent in attending supplementary courses by apprentices and young workers who are under obligation to attend such courses should be included in normal working hours.

5.4: INDICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

On the basis of these findings, we identify several possibilities to develop further research.

First, there is a clear need to pay more attention to the characteristics of VET when looking at its effect on company performance. Most of the studies only considered whether training had taken place in a firm, and how much, but did not register the type of training (formal or informal). Making a distinction between different training forms, training fields and target groups would make more precise conclusions possible about what works, and could therefore lead to better practical recommendations.

Second, many studies focused on the relationship between VET and productivity or profitability, but other performance indicators received less attention. The

influence of VET on aspects such as job satisfaction, absenteeism levels and innovation is an interesting topic for further research. In particular, it could be interesting to investigate differences in training needs and attitudes towards training between leaders and followers in terms of innovation.

Finally, most of the studies focused on the existing relationship between training and productivity. However, it is likely that the full impact of training on productivity will develop over time: this is a concept similar to the importance of learning-by-doing that resulted in the development of the learning curve. To obtain a more precise description of the way training affects productivity it would be useful to develop measures of the stock of VET (or skills) available at the firm.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a student at the Pan African Institute for Development – West Africa (PAID-WA) Buea studying for a Post Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management. I am conducting a research to investigate the impact of vocational education and training (VET) on company performance – case study CDC Bota Limbe. This information is for research purposes and will under no circumstances reveal the respondent's identity. Your sincere responses to the questions will contribute immensely to the success of this work and will be treated confidentially.

Instruction: Please tick the right or corresponding box;

- 1) Sex a) Male ☐ b) Female ☐
2) Marital status a) Single ☐ b) Married ☐

Section A

- 3) In your opinion, does vocational education and training (VET) have an impact on company performance? a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
4) Is this impact a positive one? a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
5) Have you undergone any form of VET? a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
6) Do you see VET as an investment or a cost for the company?
 a) Investment ☐ b) Cost ☐

Section B

- 7) Would you say your work performance has improved as a result of VET?
a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
- 8) Do you and your other colleagues perform a particular job the same way?
a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
- 9) Does the length of VET have any significance on the performances of you and your colleagues? a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
- 10) Would you therefore say that the level of performance of the workers vary with the level or size of VET? a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

Section C

- 11) As an employee, are you satisfied with your job?
a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
- 12) Do you think you perform your duties to the required level?
a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
- 13) Is this performance as a result of the VET you have undergone?
a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
- 14) Would you therefore say that VET guarantees your employability?
a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐
- 15) Would you recommend VET to companies as well as employees?
a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐