

**Vocational Studies and Empowerment of The Disabled in Different Communities in Uganda: A Case Study of Usuk Sub-County in Katakwi District**

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**ABSTRACT**

The major objective of this study lied in finding out whether there was a relationship between Vocational Studies and Empowerment of the disabled persons in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi District. Other objectives included: To find out the level of growth of Vocational Institutions in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi district and to find out the extent at which the disabled are empowered in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi district. The study adopted a descriptive and observational research design. Objective one aimed at finding out the level of growth of vocational institutions in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi district. The researcher concluded on this objective from the findings that the level of growth of vocational institutions is still low and this is due to high rates of poverty witnessed in the area and low developments. Objective two aimed at finding out the extent of empowering the disabled persons. The researcher concluded on this objective that the extent of empowering the disabled is low and this is attributed to high levels of corruption at Katakwi District headquarters where funding to help disabled people are embezzled and consumed by individuals. The third objective aimed at establishing at the relationship between Vocational studies and empowerment of disabled. The there is a strong positive and statistically significant ( $r = 0.708$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) correlation/relationship between Vocational studies and empowerment of disabled. The researcher concluded that if the level of implementing Vocational studies is high, the level of empowering the disabled with skills is also high and if the level of implementing Vocational studies is low, then the level of empowering the disabled with skills is also low. The researcher recommended the government to provide enough funding to the districts such that vocational training centers are set up in order to equip the disabled with skills like carpentry.

**Key words: Vocational, Disabled, Empowerment and Communities.**

**Background of the study**

Vocational studies according to (Ntirandekura, 2022) is a type of education that prepares people to work as a technician or to be employed in a craft or trade as a tradesman or craftsman (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023). Vocational study is education that teaches you skills directly related to work (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). According to (Rosette, 2023), vocational studies is a type of study that involves preparation for a specific occupation in agriculture, commerce or industry

through a combination of theoretical instruction and practical experience provided by many secondary schools in their business and technical departments (Winny et al., 2023). Vocational training is a different learning option than a college or university route. It offers a path that imparts the necessary skills and knowledge (Emmanuel et al., 2023). Also (Ntirandekura et al., 2022) stated that vocational studies are studies that involve learning programs or courses that focus on skills needed for a specific job

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function or trade (Benjamin Badeji & Olufunsho Abayomi, 2011). According to (Kazaara, 2023), empowering people with disabilities refers to giving them various opportunities to discover themselves, understand their environment, realize their rights and take control of their lives and participate in important decisions that lead to their fate. Disability empowerment is the level of choice, influence and control that users of mental health services can exercise over events in their lives (Jac & Kazaara, 2023). People with disabilities face particular challenges in education and training (Ntirandekura, 2022). Most of them do not have access to basic reading and math skills: according to (Levels & Municipality, 2023), it is estimated that 98% of children with physical or mental disabilities in developing countries do not attend school. Globally, people with disabilities face discrimination and barriers that prevent them from fully participating in skills training and employment programs (Omotunde

et al., 2013). People with disabilities are often excluded from work because the ignorance and discriminatory aspect of society is the reason for their inability to compete based on relevant skills or qualifications. For people with disabilities, training, which should include skills, knowledge and attitudes, is very often the key to success in finding employment (Ntirandekura, 2022). Vocational training – under the guidance of qualified instructors and leading, if possible, to some form of recognized certification – is an essential passport to employment (Emmanuel et al., 2023). The most frequently mentioned barrier that disabled people encounter when looking for a job is the lack of professional education. This is more often a barrier to finding a job for women than for men (Kazaara, 2023). This may mean that vocational training does not exist, the quality of training is low, or that people with disabilities are excluded from vocational training.

### **Statement of the problem**

There are few vocational schools in Katakwi district yet there is a great need for people to study in these schools. The government has tried to build some vocational skills in Katakwi district to help people in the area, especially those with disabilities (Kazaara, 2023). So the problem was to find out if there is a relationship between vocational study and empowerment of disabled persons in Usuk Sub-District, Katakwi District.

### **Major objectives**

The major objective of the study was to find out the relationship between Vocational Studies and Empowerment of the disabled persons in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi District.

### **Specific objectives**

1. To find out the level of growth of Vocational Institutions in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi district.
2. To find out the extent at which the disabled are empowered in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi district.
3. To find out the relationship between Vocational Studies and Empowerment of the disabled persons in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi District.

### **Research questions**

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1. What is the level of growth of Vocational Institutions in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi district?
2. What is the extent at which the disabled are empowered in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi district?
3. What is the relationship between Vocational Studies and Empowerment of the disabled persons in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi District.?

### Methodology.

The study used descriptive research design because of the nature of the variables that were at hand to produce data required for qualitative and quantitative analysis to allow simultaneous description of views, perceptions and beliefs at any single point in time (White, B, 2000). The study was carried out in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi district in Uganda. Study population as defined by Babbie, (2004) is aggregation of elements from which sample is actually selected. The study targets a population with in the research geographical area. The study population for the study were 20 disabled people, 40 community members, 18 vocational teachers, LC1 chairperson and a District Education Officer of Katakwi District. These were correlated with Slovenes formula of sample size determination to obtain a sample population of 80 respondents from a target population of 100 elements of interest for this study. The rest of the sample was sampled using purposive sampling technique. The different two methods were used to collect data which included questionnaire and interview method. These were used to collect data from all industrial workers and community members from Hima cement factory, Kasese district. To establish the reliability of the research instruments, the researcher carried out a pilot test of the instruments using another similar group with the same characteristics as the one targeted in the study. Quantitative data analyses were carried out using a software application called Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) (Oromo et al., 2023). Qualitative data was organized according to themes identified from research questions and analyzed using content analysis. Data from interviews were organized and presented inform of report.

### Results.

#### The level of growth of vocational institutions

**Table 1: Shows level of growth of vocational institutions**

|      |         |        |
|------|---------|--------|
| N    | Valid   | 60     |
|      | Missing | 0      |
| Mean |         | 3.5667 |

The level of growth of vocational institutions was analyzed basing on the mean which was **3.5667**. The mean is small hence indicating the low level of growth of vocational institutions. The level of growth of vocational institutions was also measured using frequency distribution tables and percentages, 58.3% of the respondents agreed that the Level of growth of vocational institutions in Usuk sub-county is low, 18.3% argued that Level of growth of vocational institutions in Usuk sub-county is high, 23.3% revealed that Level of growth of vocational institutions in Usuk sub-

county is Moderate. Under this study objective, the researcher asked respondents the practical skills that learners get from vocational schools and most respondents revealed that they provide hair dressing, carpentry, brick laying, craft making, building, tailoring and pottery.

**The extent at which the disabled are empowered in Usuk sub-county, Katakwi district** This Section describes the dependent variable (Empowerment of disabled). The dependent variable was

addressed in Section C of the questionnaire for respondents. Information regarding the extent of empowering the disabled in Usuk sub-county was collected from respondents and analyzed using SPSS Software and the results were presented and tabulated in table 4.4 below.

**Table 2: Extent of empowering disabled**

**Table 2: Shows the extent of empowering the disabled**

|      |         |        |
|------|---------|--------|
| N    | Valid   | 60     |
|      | Missing | 0      |
| Mean |         | 3.5667 |

The extent of empowering the disabled was analyzed basing on the mean which was 3.5667. The mean is small hence indicating the low extent of empowering the disabled. The extent of empowering the disabled in Usuk sub-county was also measured using frequency tables and percentages where the researcher found out that it is high because 53.3% of the total population in the study agreed that the empowering of the disabled is high and this is attributed to many resources provided to disabled persons. 25.0% agreed that the extent of empowering the disabled in Usuk sub-county is at a medium extent and only 21.7% revealed that the extent of empowering the disabled in Usuk sub-county is at a low extent.

#### **Relationship between Vocational Studies and Empowerment of Disabled**

**Table 3: Showing Pearson Correlation between Vocational Studies and Empowerment of Disabled**

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|                         |                       | Vocational Studies | Empowerment of disabled |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Vocational Studies      | Pearson Correlation   | 1.00               | .708                    |
|                         | Sig. (2-tailed)       |                    | .000                    |
| Empowerment of disabled | N Pearson Correlation | 60                 | 60                      |
|                         | Sig. (2-tailed)       | .708               | 1.00                    |
| N                       |                       | .000               |                         |
|                         |                       | 60                 | 60                      |

Table 3 indicates that there is a very strong positive relationship between Vocational Studies and Empowerment of disabled at  $r = 0.708$  and since the sig. value (.000) was far less than 0.05, which is the maximum level of significance required declaring a significant relationship between Vocational Studies and Empowerment of disabled, this implies that if the level of implementing Vocational studies is high, the level of empowering the disabled with skills is also high and if the level of implementing Vocational studies is low, then the level of empowering the disabled with skills is also low (Nelson et al., 2023). A study was conducted by Guatemala (2000) in Kenya, it was found out that skills development systems can benefit from collaboration with other services, organizations and agencies whose mandates and roles are linked to promoting the empowerment of skills in persons with disabilities and employment of persons with disabilities. Schools catering to persons with disabilities can play an active role in encouraging students with disabilities to apply for vocational training courses.

### Summary of Findings

The responses were interpreted as follows, 58.3% of the respondents agreed that the Level of growth of vocational institutions in Usuk sub-county is low, 18.3% argued that Level of growth of vocational institutions in Usuk sub-county is high, 23.3% revealed that Level of growth of vocational institutions in Usuk sub-county is Moderate. Under this study objective, the researcher asked respondents the practical skills that learners get from vocational schools and most respondents revealed that they provide hair dressing, carpentry, brick laying and craft making. The extent of empowering the disabled in Usuk sub-county was found to be high because 53.3% of the total population in the study agreed that the empowering of the disabled is high and this is attributed to many resources provided to disabled persons. 25.0% agreed that the extent of empowering the disabled in Usuk sub-county is at a medium extent and only 21.7% revealed that the extent of empowering the disabled in Usuk sub-county is at a low extent. There is a very strong positive relationship between Vocational Studies and Empowerment of disabled at  $r = 0.708$  and since the sig. value (.000) was far less than 0.05, which is the maximum level of significance required declaring a significant relationship between Vocational Studies and Empowerment of disabled, this implies that if the level of implementing Vocational studies is high, the level of empowering the disabled with skills is also high and if the

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level of implementing Vocational studies is low, then the level of empowering the disabled with skills is also low.

### Conclusion of the findings

Objective one aimed at finding out the level of growth of vocational institutions in Usuk sub- county, Katakwi district. The researcher concluded on this objective from the findings that the level of growth of vocational institutions is still low and this is due to high rates of poverty witnessed in the area and low developments. Objective two aimed at finding out the extent of empowering the disabled persons. The researcher concluded on this objective that the extent of empowering the disabled is low and this is attributed to high levels of corruption at Katakwi District headquarters where funding to help disabled people are embezzled and consumed by individuals. The third objective aimed at establishing at the relationship between Vocational studies and empowerment of disabled. The there is a high positive ( $r = 0.708$ ) correlation/relationship between Vocational studies and empowerment of disabled. The researcher concluded that if the level of implementing Vocational studies is high, the level of empowering the disabled with skills is also high and if the level of implementing Vocational studies is low, then the level of empowering the disabled with skills is also low.

### Recommendations of the study

The researcher recommended the government to provide enough funding to the districts such that vocational training centers are set up in order to equip the disabled with skills like carpentry.

The researcher as well recommended the community members to always get involved in skillful activities.

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