Female Learners' Access to Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) Courses: Case of Marine Engineering in Mombasa Technical Training Institute, Kenya

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Abstract

Perceptions and realities associated with male or female -dominated subjects, courses and careers are gradually changing due to socio-economic lifestyle shift. This paper aimed at exploring strategies for enhancing female participation in SET courses with close examination of Marine Engineering students in Mombasa Technical Training Institute. Objectives of the study included: to explore various factors influencing female participation in SET courses; to investigate retention and completion rate of female students in marine engineering students; to establish strategies for enhancing female participation in SET courses; to determine relevance in female students enrolling in SET courses with reference to Marine Engineering students. The study used case study research design and document desk review of relevant research literature. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as instruments of data collection. Resultant data was quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. Descriptive data analysis was done using measures of central tendencies while content analysis was applied for descriptive data analysis. Findings revealed reluctance by female students to enroll in SET courses due to various factors. There was high dropout rate of female students from marine engineering due to different reasons. However majority of female students who pursued marine engineering maintained the course was relevant for sustainable livelihood. The paper reveals that application of strategies such as advocacy, gender mainstreaming approaches, policy and partnerships would improve access of female learners into SET courses. The paper concludes that adoption certain gender mainstreaming approaches; advocacy, partnerships and ODL within educational institutions policies enhance access and equitable opportunities to relevant education for sustainable development.

Keywords: Access, SET, male-dominated, Marine Engineering, Seafarers, Gender-mainstreaming, Strategies, Equitable opportunities, Sustainable development.

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