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Vocational Education Programmes for Enhancing Students' Career Development in Public Secondary Schools in Monduli District Council, Tanzania

Daudi S. Lewanga
Institute of Accountancy Ausha, Songea Ruvuma Campus
Email: daudilaizer2@gmail.com

Kennedy Omondi Otieno[1] & Christine Mnjokava[2]
St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Arusha.
Email: omondiken2016@gmail.com[1] & cmnjokava@yahoo.com[2]

Abstract: *This study examined vocational education programmes for enhancing students' career development in public secondary schools. Specifically, the study examined how the programmes provided students with skills for career development and assessed strategies for improving implementation. The study employed convergent mixed methods design. The study was guided by Social Cognitive Career Theory. From a target population of 15,110, a sample of 22 teachers and 70 students and 7 school heads were selected using stratified, simple random and criterion purposive sampling techniques. Questionnaires and interview guide were used to collect data. The instruments were validated by experts and tested for reliability whereby 0.893 and 0.738 coefficients for students' and teachers' questionnaire were obtained using Cronbach's Alpha. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the SPSS version 25 and presented in tables while qualitative data were analyzed thematically alongside research questions. Ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation and duly acknowledgment of all cited work to avoid plagiarism were observed. The findings also showed that vocational education contributed to students' career development by promoting practical skills, entrepreneurship skills, teamwork, problem-solving ability, creativity, confidence, and awareness of possible career paths. The study concluded that vocational education programmes were important in preparing students for employment, self-employment, and future career choices but their effectiveness depended on availability of resources, trained personnel, supportive management, and practical learning opportunities. The study recommended increased government support, improved school facilities, stronger community participation, employment of qualified vocational teachers, and regular career guidance services in public secondary schools.*

Keywords: *Vocational education, Career development, Self-employment, Secondary schools, Tanzania*

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1. Introduction

Secondary education prepares learners for academic progression, practical competence, occupational awareness and productive participation after school completion. Muslim et al. (2023) argue that vocational education directly connects classroom learning with occupational competence and career maturity. This connection matters because learners require more than certificates when entering work or self-employment after school. Vocational programmes offer structured activities that allow students to practice skills before facing labour market demands during

learning. Career development among secondary students depends on information provided, practical skills and opportunities for guided exploration and progression. According to Kim and Lee (2023), career education programmes improved high school students' career development competencies in South Korea. Such improvement occurs when learners show interests in practical sessions and supervised school experiences within school programmes.

Vocational education contributes by helping students relate personal interests with realistic occupations and livelihood choices after school completion. Learners also need self-efficacy because confidence influences effort persistence and willingness to pursue careers in demanding practical activities. Therefore, career development is an outcome shaped by practical school experiences. Modern work requires technical ability, social competence, entrepreneurial thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills among graduates in contemporary economies. Sulistiobudi et al. (2023) reported that psychological capital and career congruence supported vocational students' employability among vocational learners. Jaedun et al. (2024) treated interpersonal skills as important components within vocational education curricula for future workplaces. Practical school programmes therefore need to combine hands-on skills with attitudes required in changing workplaces and career pathways.

Mokoro (2024) found that technical secondary education shaped students experiences through practical learning exposure among learners in Africa. African contexts also show that facilities, teacher preparation and community perceptions influence vocational learning outcomes in secondary schools. Many schools introduced vocational subjects while still lacking workshops, equipment funds and qualified trainers locally in many contexts. Such conditions may reduce students' ability to acquire occupational skills during secondary school years within school programmes. The challenge becomes stronger in rural and semi-rural areas where school resources are limited for many learners today. Vocational education therefore needs examination within specific local contexts rather than broad policy description in educational practice. The local focus provided data on how vocational education related to students' career development in Monduli schools today. According to George (2025) the data collected from 394 vocational graduates were analyzed and the results shows that 83.6% believed that vocational education provide employment skills while 62.3% agree that it enhance productivity. However, 39.3% highlight the need for reforms to align with labour market's needs. This view guided the study towards investigating skills that enhance students' career development in secondary schools in Monduli District Council. The present study responded by examining vocational education implementation in public secondary schools within in Monduli area.

1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do vocational educational programmes provide students with skills for enhancing their career development in public secondary schools in Monduli District Council?
2. What are the strategies for improving effective implementations of vocational education programmes in Public Secondary Schools?

2. Literature Review

The study was guided by Social Cognitive Career Theory developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett in 1994.

2.1 Social Cognitive Career Theory

The theory explains how learning experiences, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals influence career development.

2.1.1 Strengths of Social Cognitive Career Theory

The theory highlights proactive factors, particularly self-efficacy (confidence in abilities), outcome expectations (expected results of actions), and personal goals which are strong predictors of career interest and choice. The theory emphasizes Self Education, or the belief in one's ability to succeed, which is linked to higher motivation, confidence, and adaptability in career decision-making (Lee & Yu, 2023; Wang et al., 2024).

2.1.2 Application of Social Cognitive Career Theory

It is relevant because vocational education programmes may shape students' confidence, career choices, and employability skills. The theory also helped to interpret how school support and practical learning conditions influenced students' career development in Monduli District Council. Social Cognitive Career Theory shows strong application in current study because it is applied for counselling students and other special groups concerning career development. Also other groups that can benefit from this study may include women and minorities in STEM, individuals with disabilities, and individuals facing structural barriers, It accounts for environmental support and barriers, offering a better explanation for why individuals may not pursue their interests due to external limitations.

2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical literature is reviewed in accordance with themes derived from specific objectives of this study in order to synthesis the research gaps.

2.2.1 The Extent to which Vocational Education Programmes Provide Students with Skills for Enhancing Skills their Career Development

Sulistiobudi et al. (2023) examined employability development among vocational secondary school students in Indonesia. The study used a quantitative predictive design and involved vocational secondary school students. Data were collected through standardized questionnaires measuring psychological capital, career congruence, and employability. The study found out that psychological capital and student-parent career congruence predicted employability development. Jaedun et al. (2024) examined students and teachers' perceptions of interpersonal skills development in vocational schools in Indonesia. The study used a mixed methods inquiry and involved vocational school students and teachers. Data were collected through questionnaires and qualitative responses on interpersonal skills toward Industry 5.0 and were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The study found out that interpersonal skills were needed alongside technical competence in vocational learning.

Tan et al. (2024) examined digital learning competence among secondary vocational school students in China. The study used a framework development and validation design and involved secondary vocational school students. Data were collected through survey instruments for validating digital learning competence dimensions. The study found out that digital learning competence was important for modern vocational preparation. Olofsson et al. (2025) examined vocational teachers' preparation of students needing support for work-based learning in upper secondary education in Sweden. The study used a qualitative education study and involved vocational teachers working with students in work-based learning. Data were collected through interviews on support practices and work-based learning preparation. The study found out that teacher support was important for students' participation in work-based learning. Nevertheless, the study was conducted in a well-resourced European context. This left a gap on rural Tanzanian public schools which may experience different support challenges.

2.2.2 Strategies for Effective Utilization of Capitation Grants in Promoting Curriculum Implementation

Pan et al. (2025) examined vocational education, skill formation, and social development in China. The study used a policy and education analysis and involved vocational education systems and skill formation evidence. Data were collected through documentary and analytical evidence on vocational development and were analyzed according to the stated research approach. The study found out that vocational education supported skilled human resource development when linked with social needs. Seo (2024) examined why vocational high school students choose college rather than immediate employment in South Korea. The study used an auto ethnographic qualitative design and involved vocational high school students' experiences represented through reflective journals. Data were collected through auto ethnographic journals and interpretive analysis. The study found out that students used vocational education as a route for long-term mobility and further learning.

Kayitare (2026) examined competence-based training and market opportunities in a Rwandan technical secondary school. The study used an evaluation design and involved trainees at Technical Secondary School. The study found out that competence-based training supported conceptual learning, skill acquisition, and market opportunities. In Tanzania, Musa (2025) examined the effects of internships on graduates' employability and soft skills in higher education settings. The study used a mixed methods study and involved graduates with internship exposure. Data were collected through survey and qualitative evidence on employability and soft skills. The study found out that internships improved employability by building confidence, networks, and career aspirations. Nevertheless, the study focused on graduates rather than secondary school students. This left a gap on secondary schools needed strategies appropriate to younger learners and local resources. The current study addressed this gap by examining collaboration, internships, and career guidance strategies in sampled schools.

3. Methodology

The study employed a convergent mixed methods research design, and a mixed methods approach which involves the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data during the same phase of the study. The design helped the study to examine vocational education programmes from complementary sources (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The target population for this study included 420 teachers, 10 heads of schools, 7,748 Form One students, and 6,932 Form Two students. This gave a total target population of 15,110 individuals (MoEST, 2026). Teachers and heads of schools were included because they understood implementation conditions, challenges, and school support for vocational education. Form one and form two students were included because they were learning under the revised curriculum that emphasized practical competence. These groups were therefore suitable for providing information related to the research objectives. The sample size was obtained using Yamane formula with a 0.1 margin of error from the target population of 15,110 (Yamane, 1967). Where: n = sample size, N = total population and e = level of precision (0.1)
Therefore,

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{15110}{1 + 15110(0.1)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{15110}{1 + 15110(0.01)}$$

$$n = \frac{15110}{1 + 151 =}$$

$$n = \frac{15110}{152}$$

≈99 respondents

Consequently, study used a sample size of 99 respondents that included 25 form one students, 45 Form two students, 22 teachers, and 7 heads of schools.

Stratified random sampling was used to select students and teachers from public secondary schools. The technique was appropriate because the population included different respondent categories that needed representation. Students were stratified by class level before selection to ensure that Form One and Form Two learners were included. Purposive sampling was used to select heads of schools because they had administrative knowledge on school programmes. These sampling procedures helped the study to collect data from respondents who were relevant to the research questions. This study administered questionnaires, and interview guides to collect data. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from students and teachers. Interview guides were used to collect qualitative data from head teachers.

Content validity of the instruments was ensured was ensured through expert review. Suggestions and comments from the experts were incorporated to improve the instruments. In order to obtain the reliability for Students' Questionnaire, the results were correlated in the Cronbach coefficient alpha (α) and the coefficient (r = 0.893) value was generated. For Teacher's Questionnaire, coefficient, r = 0.738 value was recorded. Since the Cronbach's Alpha value was above 0.70, it was considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument was reliable for use in the actual study (Zhou et al., 2022). In establishing the reliability of qualitative instruments, it was necessary to conduct peer debriefing and triangulation. The study followed ethical principles throughout the research process. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the relevant authorities before data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were observed. The researcher also avoided plagiarism by acknowledging sources used in the study. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The responses were coded and entered into SPSS version 25 to generate frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically alongside research questions.

4. Results and Discussion

This section includes presentation of the results and the discussion based on the vocational education programmes for enhancing students' career development in public secondary schools in Monduli District Council.

4.1 The Extent to which Vocational Education Programmes Provide Students with Skills for Enhancing Skills their Career Development in Monduli District Council

The first objective of this study aimed at examining the extent to which vocational education programmes provided students with skills for enhancing career development in public secondary schools in Monduli District Council. The quantitative data were collected from students and teachers while heads of schools were interviewed to provide qualitative explanation. A Likert Scale of Very High Extent (VHE) =5, High Extent (HE) =4, Moderate Extent (ME) =3, Low Extent (LE) =2, Very Low Extent (VLE) =1 was used. The quantitative data were analyzed through frequencies, percentages, and means. The responses from students are presented in Table 1. The discussion concentrates on selected issues with relatively high and low mean scores so that the strongest and weakest areas can be interpreted clearly. The selected issues are explained through the numerical responses and supported by qualitative evidence whereas the interview information clarifies the pattern.

Table 1: Extent to which Vocational Education provide Skills for Enhancing their Career Development (n=70)

No	Item	VHE f(%)	HE f(%)	ME f(%)	LE f(%)	VLE f(%)	Mean
1	Acquisition of practical skills relevant to future careers	46 (65.7)	20 (28.6)	4 (5.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.60
2	Entrepreneurship learning for shaping business mentality	34 (49.3)	17 (24.6)	15 (21.7)	2 (2.9)	1 (1.4)	4.17
3	Application of vocational skills in real-life situations	49 (70.0)	6 (8.6)	10 (14.3)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.1)	4.34
4	Development of occupational problem-solving skills	27 (38.6)	32 (45.7)	8 (11.4)	3 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	4.19
5	Acquisition of entrepreneurial skills through vocational education activities	39 (57.4)	16 (23.5)	9 (13.2)	2 (2.9)	2 (2.9)	4.29

6	Identification of potential career paths	28 (41.2)	20 (29.4)	20 (29.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.12
7	Confidence in performing practical tasks through vocational training	44 (64.7)	15 (22.1)	6 (8.8)	3 (4.4)	0 (0.0)	4.47
8	Encouragement of future self-employment	31 (45.6)	19 (27.9)	11 (16.2)	6 (8.8)	1 (1.5)	4.07
9	Acquisition of teamwork and collaboration skills through vocational learning	19 (27.1)	28 (40.0)	14 (20.0)	8 (11.4)	1 (1.4)	3.80
10	Development of creativity and innovation skills	44 (63.8)	15 (21.7)	10 (14.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.49
11	Preparation for employment opportunities after completing school	37 (54.4)	20 (29.4)	9 (13.2)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.9)	4.32

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 1 presents students responses on skills for enhancing students' career development. Regarding acquisition of practical skills relevant to future careers, the data in Table 1 show that 65.7% of students selected very high extent response category and 28.6% selected high extent category. A further 5.7% remained neutral while 0.0% selected the lower category and 0.0% selected very low extent. The mean score was 4.60 which indicate a very high level of response among students. The results suggest that acquisition of practical skills relevant to future careers occupied an important place in vocational education practice in the sampled schools. Career learning becomes stronger when schools provide repeated exposure to real tasks and practical guidance in sampled schools. This result relates to Pham et al. (2022) who reported that entrepreneurial learning can build intention through experience and self-efficacy. It implies that acquisition of practical skills relevant to future careers needs continued attention when schools plan vocational education activities. The neutral and lower responses further show that implementation was not uniform among all respondents. The remaining differences should guide targeted school support rather than general assumptions.

Concerning identification of potential career paths, the data in Table 1 show that 41.2% of students selected the highest response category and 29.4% selected the next category. A further 29.4% remained neutral while 0.0% selected the lower category and 0.0% selected the lowest category. The mean score was 4.12 which indicate a high level of response among students. The mean value indicates that identification of potential career paths occupied an important place in respondents' judgment of vocational education practice in the sampled schools. Vocational activities should therefore move beyond occasional classroom explanations and become routine school practices during daily school practice. It implies that identification of potential career paths needs continued attention when schools plan vocational education activities. The remaining differences should guide targeted school support rather than general assumptions. The evidence conforms to that of Kim (2023) who reported that career experience programmes and career clubs can raise high school students career development competencies. This means that identification of potential career paths can contribute to students' career development when schools provide conditions for meaningful practice. Career skills develop strongly when learners repeatedly practice tasks that reflect real demands within their local environment practically. Such practice can deepen self-belief because students witness their own progress during vocational learning activities under supervision.

Qualitative evidence added practical meaning to the responses from students. This was observed by one head of school who said:

> Vocational education provides skills through practice, education, and experience. Learners understand career issues better when they are shown how activities work, how products are exchanged, and how the knowledge gained at school can help them reach personal goals through normal school practice (personal interview, 24th, May 2026).

The same matter was explained further by another head of school:

> Students benefit when vocational activities give them knowledge through career workshops. Such opportunities make them more confident because they see that agriculture, business, and practical skills may help them work hard and plan future lives (Personal interview, 27th, May 2026).

The qualitative responses add a practical explanation to the quantitative results on skills and effort. Heads of schools described the issue from the position of people who supervise daily implementation. Their comments show that vocational education becomes meaningful when learners meet real tasks, materials, and guidance. This finding relates to Bahrun et al. (2026) who observed that employability development is strengthened when learners gain confidence and career-related support. The interview finding therefore agrees with the numerical findings because both forms of data point to school-level conditions. The interview evidence also points to self-efficacy as a channel through which practice shapes aspirations. The comments also show

that vocational education can be weakened when resources or community support are inadequate. Therefore, the findings imply that practical learning needs organized support before it can strengthen students' career development. The interpretation fits Bahrun et al. (2026) who established that vocational education can guide career maturity when students connect skills with future work. The interview evidence supports the quantitative results by showing that skills, experience, and hardworking were repeatedly associated with career goals. The comments also suggest that career development is built through practice rather than explanation alone. This means that school activities should deliberately connect skills with future livelihood choices.

Focusing on confidence in performing practical tasks through vocational training, the data in Table 1 show that 64.7% of students selected the highest response category and 22.1% selected the next category. A further 8.8% remained neutral while 4.4% selected the lower category and 0.0% selected the lowest category. The mean score of 4.47 indicates a very high level of response among students. The observed pattern shows that confidence in performing practical tasks through vocational training occupied an important place in respondents' judgement of vocational education practice in the sampled schools. Practical career support should be widened so that fewer learners remain uncertain about vocational pathways in sampled schools. The finding is connected to Mulyono et al. (2025) who reported that employability skills include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and career sustainability. This means that confidence in performing practical tasks through vocational training can contribute to students' career development when schools provide conditions for meaningful practice. Career pathway identification needs more than information because students also require examples drawn from practical school experiences professionally. Guided exposure can help learners' link personal abilities with occupations that appear realistic within their communities through projects.

In relation to encouragement of future self-employment, the data in Table 1 show that 45.6% of students selected the highest response category and 27.9% selected the next category. A further 16.2% remained neutral while 8.8% selected the lower category and 1.5% selected the lowest category. The mean score of 4.07 indicates a high level of response among students. The distribution suggests that encouragement for future self-employment occupied an important place in vocational education practice in the sampled schools. Although implementation quality depends on facilities, trained teachers, and school management commitment to practical learning during daily school practice. The finding can be linked to that of Akinlade (2025) who reported that career experience programmes and career clubs can raise high school students' career development competencies. This means that encouragement for future self-employment can contribute to students' career development when schools provide conditions for meaningful practice. Confidence grows when students complete practical tasks and receive correction that improves their skills and judgment within communities. This process supports career development by connecting self efficacy with visible evidence of personal competence during practical learning.

With reference to acquisition of teamwork and collaboration skills through vocational learning, the data in Table 1 show that 27.1% of students selected the highest response category and 40.0% selected the next category. A further 20.0% remained neutral while 11.4% selected the lower category and 1.4% selected the lowest category. The mean score was 3.80 which indicate a high level of response among students. The responses indicate that acquisition of teamwork and collaboration skills through vocational learning occupied an important place in respondents' judgment of vocational education practice in the sampled schools. Vocational learning should be organized as a sustained programme rather than isolated or occasional activities in sampled schools. This result is supported by Mulyono et al. (2025) who reported that employability skills include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and career sustainability. This means that acquisition of teamwork and collaboration skills through vocational learning can contribute to students' career development when schools provide conditions for meaningful practice. Self employment messages become stronger when learners see how school skills can generate products services and income reliably. Practical business activities can help students view vocational education as preparation for independence beyond formal employment in practice.

The responses were given further meaning through interview information from school leadership. One head of school stated:

> Career workshops give learners a chance to talk about goals, work, and opportunities after school. Students become more serious when they learn that vocational skills can be used for employment, self-employment, or small activities within their local environment through normal school practice (personal interview, 28th, May 2026).

A second head of school gave a supporting explanation:

> Through vocational learning, students gain experience from agriculture, animal keeping, and business activities. These experiences help them connect school knowledge with society because they learn how skills can be applied when buying, selling, producing, or solving practical problems through ordinary school practice (personal interview, 29th, May 2026).

The qualitative evidence adds a practical explanation to the quantitative results on collaboration and occupations. Heads

of schools described the issue from the position of people who supervise daily implementation. Their comments show that vocational education becomes meaningful when learners meet real tasks, materials, and guidance. This interpretation relates to that of Jaedun et al. (2024) who observed that soft skills are needed alongside technical competence in modern vocational education. The interview evidence therefore agrees with the numerical findings because both forms of data point to school-level conditions. These skills matter because future work requires cooperation, communication, and shared problem solving among learners. The comments also show that vocational education can be weakened when resources or community support are inadequate. Therefore, the findings imply that practical learning needs organized support before it can strengthen students' career development.

4.2 Strategies for Improving Vocational Education Programmes in Public Secondary Schools

The second objective of this study aimed at suggesting strategies for improving the implementation of vocational education programmes in public secondary schools in Monduli District Council. The quantitative data were collected from students and teachers while heads of schools were interviewed to provide qualitative explanation. Likert Scale of 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2= Disagree and 1= Strong Disagree was adopted. The quantitative data were analyzed through frequencies, percentages, and means. The findings from students are presented in Table 2. The discussion below concentrates on selected issues with relatively high and low mean scores so that the strongest and weakest areas can be interpreted clearly. The selected issues are explained through the numerical responses and supported by qualitative evidence where the interview information clarifies the pattern.

Table 2: Students Responses on Strategies for Improving Vocational Education Programmes (n=70)

No	Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
1	Equipping students with vocational related skills	50 (71.4)	9 (12.9)	4 (5.7)	0 (0.0)	7 (10.0)	4.36
2	Teaching positive issues related to vocational education	50 (71.4)	6 (8.6)	9 (12.9)	2 (2.9)	3 (4.3)	4.40
3	Developing national policies for graduates to attend vocational training	35 (50.0)	24 (34.3)	8 (11.4)	1 (1.4)	2 (2.9)	4.27
4	Integrating the education curriculum with vocational education	22 (31.4)	18 (25.7)	21 (30.0)	3 (4.3)	6 (8.6)	3.67
5	Providing financial support	33 (48.5)	16 (23.5)	12 (17.6)	6 (8.8)	1 (1.5)	4.09
6	Providing community education concerning vocational education	36 (51.4)	14 (20.0)	18 (25.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.9)	4.17
7	Increasing enrolment in vocational colleges	30 (44.1)	13 (19.1)	16 (23.5)	6 (8.8)	3 (4.4)	3.90
8	Collaborating with parents and other stakeholders	34 (50.7)	18 (26.9)	10 (14.9)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.5)	4.13
9	Strengthening government support	39 (55.7)	11 (15.7)	10 (14.3)	5 (7.1)	5 (7.1)	4.06
10	Encouraging creativity at lower levels	26 (37.1)	9 (12.9)	8 (11.4)	15(21.4)	12(17.1)	3.31

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 2 presents students responses on strategies for improving vocational education programmes. Regarding equipping students with vocational related skills, the data in Table 2 show that 71.4% of students selected the highest response category and 12.9% selected the next category. A further 5.7% remained neutral while 0.0% selected the lower category and 10.0% selected the lowest category. The mean score was 4.36 which indicate a very high level of response among students. The evidence indicates that equipping students with vocational related skills occupied an important place in respondents' judgment of vocational education practice in the sampled schools. Such responses show how school conditions can shape confidence, practical exposure, and vocational participation among learners in schools. This interpretation is strengthened by Phillip (2021) who reported that vocational high school experiences can influence both direct employment choices and progression to higher education. This means that equipping students with vocational related skills can contribute to students' career development when schools provide conditions for meaningful practice. Collaboration skills become stronger when vocational tasks require learners to communicate plan and complete shared activities during implementation. These abilities may support career development because modern workplaces reward cooperation alongside technical competence within sampled school settings.

Concerning teaching positive issues related to vocational education, the data in Table 2 show that 71.4% of students selected the highest response category and 8.6% selected the next category. A further 12.9% remained neutral while 2.9% selected the lower category and 4.3% selected the lowest category. The mean score was 4.40 which indicate a very

high level of response among students. The score suggests that teaching positive issues related to vocational education occupied an important place in respondents' judgement of vocational education practice in the sampled schools. Social Cognitive Career Theory fits this result because practice can strengthen self-efficacy and occupational intention in sampled schools. The result is comparable to Olofsson et al. (2025) who reported that vocational teachers support students when school learning is connected with work-based practice. This means that teaching positive issues related to vocational education can contribute to students' career development when schools provide conditions for meaningful practice. Facility shortages reduce learning opportunities because students cannot fully practice the skills described during lessons within learning environments. Addressing such gaps would make vocational programmes more credible and more relevant to career preparation through teacher guidance.

The same issue was further explained through qualitative evidence from school leadership. One head of school said:

> Budget support should be increased so that schools can buy tools, provide field areas, and maintain facilities. When resources are available, vocational activities become more regular, and students learn through doing rather than only listening. (personal interview, 29th, May 2026).

A related explanation came from another head of school:

> Students' contribution may support schools where resources are limited, but it should be planned carefully. The important issue is that vocational education needs dependable materials, facilities, and tools to continue practical activities without interruption. This is possible through practical learning activities in public secondary schools (personal interview, 29th, May 2026).

The qualitative evidence adds a practical explanation to the quantitative results on budget and contribution. Heads of schools described the issue from the position of people who supervise daily implementation. Their comments show that vocational education becomes meaningful when learners meet real tasks, materials, and guidance. This interpretation relates to Phillip (2021) who observed that employability improves when learning experiences are connected with practical competencies. The interview evidence therefore agrees with the numerical findings because both forms of data point to school-level conditions. The strategy may support learning when contributions remain transparent, affordable, and clearly linked to practice. The comments also show that vocational education can be weakened when resources or community support are inadequate. Therefore, the findings imply that practical learning needs organized support before it can strengthen students' career development. The interview evidence supports the quantitative data by showing that weak support can prevent students from applying skills outside school. The accounts also reveal that implementation requires cooperation beyond the classroom. This implies that schools should connect vocational activities with local work opportunities.

Focusing on developing national policies for graduates to attend vocational training, the data in Table 2 show that 50.0% of students selected the highest response category and 34.3% selected the next category. A further 11.4% remained neutral while 1.4% selected the lower category and 2.9% selected the lowest category. The mean score was 4.27 which indicate a very high level of response among students. The item shows that developing national policies for graduates to attend vocational training occupied an important place in vocational education practice in the sampled schools. Implementation should therefore be judged through actual school experience rather than through policy expectations alone in sampled schools. This means that developing national policies for graduates to attend vocational training can contribute to students' career development when schools provide conditions for meaningful practice. Internship shortages limit students contact real workplaces where occupational habits and expectations are learned during school activities. Stronger school community partnerships can widen practical exposure and improve the transition from learning to work across schools.

In relation to integrating the education curriculum with vocational education, the data in Table 4.9 show that 31.4% of students selected the highest response category and 25.7% selected the next category. A further 30.0% remained neutral while 4.3% selected the lower category and 8.6% selected the lowest category. The mean score was 3.67 which indicate a high level of response among the students. The data suggest that integrating the education curriculum with vocational education occupied an important place in respondents' judgment of vocational education practice in the sampled schools. Stronger practical bases would make the programme more visible to learners and more useful for career preparation locally.

The finding may be connected with Muslim et al. (2023) who reported that secondary vocational learning becomes useful when it produces occupation-related knowledge and competence. This means that integrating the education curriculum with vocational education can contribute to students' career development when schools provide conditions for meaningful practice. Community perception matters because families influence whether learners value vocational subjects as respectable career pathways for future work. Positive awareness can increase student participation and reduce the view that practical learning is academically inferior for planning.

With reference to increasing enrolment in vocational colleges, the data in Table 2 show that 44.1% of students selected the highest response category and 19.1% selected

the next category. A further 23.5% remained neutral while 8.8% selected the lower category and 4.4% selected the lowest category. The mean score was 3.90 which indicate a high level of response among students. The pattern reflects that increasing enrolment in vocational colleges occupied an important place in respondents' judgment of vocational education practice in the sampled schools. Uneven access to practice may weaken career confidence among students who cannot participate in regular activities in schools. The pattern can be linked with Muslim et al. (2023) who reported that secondary vocational learning becomes useful when it produces occupation-related knowledge and competence. This means that increasing enrolment in vocational colleges can contribute to students' career development when schools provide conditions for meaningful practice. Curriculum mismatch can weaken implementation when school content does not match tools activities and community opportunities during practice. Closer alignment would help learners see direct connections between classroom content and practical career possibilities within community settings.

The interview information showed how schools viewed the proposed improvement measures. One head of school explained:

> The school can introduce small businesses to get money for vocational education. Such activities may provide materials and also teach students entrepreneurship, buying, selling, saving, and planning, which are useful for future self-employment within the ordinary school programme and surrounding community setting (personal interview, 29th, May 2026).

Another school leader explained the proposed response as follows:

> Community education is needed because some people still do not value vocational education. When parents and local leaders receive information, they may support school activities, provide materials, and encourage students to use practical skills through practical learning activities in public secondary schools (personal interview, 29th, May 2026).

The qualitative responses add a practical explanation to the quantitative results on tools and vocational teachers. Heads of schools described the issue from the position of people who supervise daily implementation. Their comments show that vocational education becomes meaningful when learners meet real tasks, materials, and guidance. This interpretation relates to Lee and Yu (2023) who observed that occupation-specific preparation requires resources that match practical training demands. The interview evidence therefore agrees with the numerical findings because both forms of data point to school-level conditions. Tools, spaces, and trained teachers create the foundation for regular and safe vocational practice. The comments also show that vocational education can be weakened when resources or community support are inadequate. Therefore, the findings imply that practical learning needs organized support before it can strengthen students' career development. Further, the evidence is comparable to Barigye (2024) who pointed out that funding, equipment, and curriculum conditions affect vocationalized secondary schools.

Additionally, eachers were also requested to provide their views on strategies for improving vocational education programmes in public secondary schools. Their responses were quantified to generate frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The results are presented in Table 3. The data show how teachers assessed the same area from their professional position. The explanation considers selected issues with high and low mean values to show areas of strength and concern. The interpretation is linked with interview evidence where the qualitative data help to explain the school situation.

Table 3: Teachers Responses on Strategies for Improving Vocational Education Programmes in Public Secondary Schools(n=22)

No	Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
1	Equipping students with vocational related skills	12 (54.5)	4 (18.2)	2 (9.1)	2 (9.1)	2 (9.1)	4.00
2	Teaching positive issues related to vocational education	11 (50.0)	5 (22.7)	2 (9.1)	2 (9.1)	2 (9.1)	3.95
3	Developing national policies for graduates to attend vocational training	7 (31.8)	6 (27.3)	3 (13.6)	3 (13.6)	3 (13.6)	3.50
4	Integrating the education curriculum with vocational education	10 (45.5)	4 (18.2)	2 (9.1)	2 (9.1)	4 (18.2)	3.64
5	Providing financial support	9 (40.9)	3 (13.6)	8 (36.4)	0 (0.0)	2 (9.1)	3.77
6	Providing community education concerning vocational education	10 (45.5)	8 (36.4)	1 (4.5)	3 (13.6)	0 (0.0)	4.14
7	Increasing enrolment in vocational colleges	9 (40.9)	5 (22.7)	6 (27.3)	2 (9.1)	0 (0.0)	3.95

8	Collaborating with parents and other stakeholders	10 (45.5)	6 (27.3)	4 (18.2)	1 (4.5)	1 (4.5)	4.05
9	Strengthening government support	9 (40.9)	7 (31.8)	1 (4.5)	4 (18.2)	1 (4.5)	3.86
10	Encouraging creativity at lower levels	10 (45.5)	6 (27.3)	4 (18.2)	1 (4.5)	1 (4.5)	4.05

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 3 presents teachers responses on strategies for improving vocational education programmes. Looking at developing national policies for graduates to attend vocational training, the data in Table 3 show that 31.8% of teachers selected the highest response category and 27.3% selected the next category. A further 13.6% remained neutral while 13.6% selected the lower category and 13.6% selected the lowest category. The mean score was 3.50 which indicate a high level of response among teachers. The results suggest that developing national policies for graduates to attend vocational training occupied an important place in respondents' judgement of vocational education practice in the sampled schools. The same programme may produce unequal benefits when schools differ in resources, teachers, and practical spaces in schools. The interpretation is close to Inderanata and Sukardi (2023) who reported that vocational subjects can improve career awareness and support decisions about future pathways. This means that developing national policies for graduates to attend vocational training can contribute to students' career development when schools provide conditions for meaningful practice. Career education gaps leave students uncertain about how vocational subjects relate to future work opportunities through sustained support. Regular counselling can translate practical learning into clearer choices for employment entrepreneurship and further training across sampled schools.

School leaders gave additional explanation on the proposed strategies. One head of school noted:

> Provision of education and efficient tools can help students apply vocational learning in real situations. When learners receive guidance, materials, and practice opportunities, they gain confidence to use skills within school and community environments through practical learning activities in public secondary schools (Personal interview with SH4, 28th May, 2026).

This point was supported by another head of school who said:

> Students' contribution can assist the school when resources are limited, although support must be transparent. Vocational education needs materials, facilities, and tools, and any contribution should help students practice rather than create unnecessary burdens through practical learning activities in public secondary schools (Personal interview with SH4, 28th May, 2026).

The qualitative evidence adds a practical explanation to the quantitative results on school income and community perception. Heads of schools described the issue from the position of people who supervise daily implementation. Their comments show that vocational education becomes meaningful when learners meet real tasks, materials, and guidance. This finding relates to Social Cognitive Career Theory which explains how learning experiences, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals influence career development. The finding also aligns with Inderanata and Sukardi (2023) who observed that negative attitudes toward vocational skills can reduce support for practical education. The interview evidence therefore agrees with the numerical findings because both forms of data point to school-level conditions. Community education may reduce negative perceptions and increase willingness to support school vocational activities. The comments also show that vocational education can be weakened when resources or community support are inadequate. Therefore, the findings imply that practical learning needs organized support before it can strengthen students' career development. The finding also reflects Otache and Edopkolor (2022) who noted that vocational education contributes to skill formation for social and economic development. The interview evidence agrees with the quantitative results because respondents connected school activities with society and practical application. The comments also show that learners need opportunities to practise beyond classroom theory. This means that vocational education should remain relevant to community livelihoods.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

From the findings, the study concluded that vocational education programmes contributed to students' career development by providing practical skills, experience, confidence, entrepreneurship orientation, teamwork, creativity, and career awareness. The findings showed that students benefited most where vocational education is connected with real-life activities such as agriculture, trading, and workshops. This implies that vocational education helps learners to see education as preparation for future livelihoods. It also suggests that career development is strengthened when learners gain practical experiences that increase their confidence and occupational direction. The role of vocational education is therefore not limited to subject learning. It included preparation for employment, self-employment, and responsible participation in productive community activities. Therefore, vocational education is useful for enhancing career development when practical learning is organized well.

Also, on strategies for improving vocational education programmes, the study concludes that schools should equipping students with vocational related skills,

Encouraging creativity at lower levels, and collaborate with parents and other stakeholders. Likewise, the government should provide financial support for vocational training, integrate the education curriculum with vocational education and Increase enrolment in vocational colleges. Financial support will enhance availability of adequate tools, trained teachers, facilities, and stakeholder collaboration to make vocational education effective. This will also shows improve students' career development when learning experiences are connected with real-life occupations. Therefore, strengthening vocational education is necessary for supporting students' career pathways in Monduli District Council.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the researcher recommended the following:

1. School management teams should strengthen practical activities within school programmes. Activities such as agriculture, animal keeping, business, carpentry, workshops, and technical demonstrations should be planned, supervised, and monitored regularly. This is necessary because students develop career-related skills when they participate in hands-on activities.
2. School leaders should make vocational education visible in timetables, clubs, projects, and school development plans.
3. Teachers should also be encouraged to connect vocational learning with local opportunities. This will help students to relate classroom learning with the realities of work and self-employment. Therefore, school management should make practical learning a routine part of vocational education.
4. Schools should develop income-generating activities that support vocational education programmes. These activities may include school gardens, small livestock projects, carpentry products, business clubs, or other projects suitable to the local environment. This will respond to the suggestion that schools should introduce other sources of income. Income-generating activities can provide materials, maintain facilities, and support practical learning without depending only on external funding. They can also become learning sites where students practise entrepreneurship and management skills. The activities should be transparent and guided by school regulations to avoid misuse of resources. Therefore, income-generating projects can strengthen both implementation and career learning.

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