

**THE IMPACT OF MODERN AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY ON
THE PERFORMANCE OF MECHANICS IN THE INFORMAL
SECTOR: A CASE OF ELDORET JUA KALI SECTOR**

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ABSTRACT

The rapid changes in technology within Automotive Industry make Jua Kali mechanics confront many problems. This is because models do not stay long in the market requiring them to master new technologies and acquire new tools and equipment to enable them respond to market demands effectively.

The research investigated the extent to which modern Automotive Technology is affecting the operation and management of the Automotive industry within the informal sector. The research examined the specific repairs, services and maintenance of modern vehicle in Jua Kali garages, the tools and equipment used and the expertise of the personnel. The effect of the above on vehicle performance was also studied.

Since Jua Kali sector creates about 70% of the jobs in Kenya annually, it is imperative to understand the factors that affect the growth and expansion of this sector. The school curriculum has not been reviewed in phase with the changing technology, resulting in mismatch between what is actually taught in school and what is expected in the work place. Information gained from the research gave an understanding of the informal sector and can be used to upgrade Jua Kali garages to the standard of registered dealers and also to assist them to procure tools and equipment.

The study was carried out within the Eldoret Jua Kali Association jurisdiction. The subjects comprised 73 garages, which is about 77% of all registered automotive garages that deal with petrol engines. The study was both quantitative by use of descriptive statistics and qualitative by use of interview discussions and observations.

Descriptive statistics, Chi-square and Spearman Rank coefficient of correlation were used to analyze the data. Analysis of data revealed that there are significant differences on frequency of doing services between modern vehicles carried out by Jua Kali and by i dealers including tools and equipment available in Jua Kali garages and those recommended by the vehicle manufacturers. It was also found that there is high degree of positive correlation between the professional qualifications of workshop managers and those of their mechanics. Majority of Jua Kali mechanics were trained as apprentices in the informal sector and most of those with formal training possess the lowest level of technical qualifications. Jua Kali mechanics also operate on temporary locations.

Based on the findings it is recommended that policies should be developed to take care and respond to technological changes, access to land or plots, finances and infrastructure. Technical training curriculum should be reviewed to take care of long and short term requirements of the Jua Kali sector.

Suggestions for further research include performing a replication of the present study but with an improvement on the existing instruments and by changing the subjects to include all systems of petrol and diesel vehicles.