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# An Assessment of the State of Technical Vocational Education and Training in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana

*Bassey, Brendan Nicholas<sup>1</sup>; Inwang, Esther Mbuk<sup>2</sup>; Warren Oveh, Jessica Uzezi<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational Education, Library and Information Science, University of Uyo

<sup>2</sup>Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Vocational Education, Library and Information Science, University of Uyo

<sup>3</sup>Department of Educational Management and Planning Faculty of Education, University of Uyo

Email: [brendanbassey1@gmail.com](mailto:brendanbassey1@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup> [esther.inwang@yahoo.com](mailto:esther.inwang@yahoo.com)<sup>2</sup> [warrenjessica@gmail.com](mailto:warrenjessica@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to assess the state of Technical Vocational Education and Training in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana. There were two objectives and research questions respectively. The non-experimental design involving the descriptive research survey type was deployed for the purpose of this study. The population of this study consisted of 408 final year ND 2 students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ukana located in Essien Udim Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Due to the peculiarity of the individuals involved in the population of the study, judgmental sampling technique was used to select eighty two (82) respondents representing 20% of the entire population. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The reliability of the instruments was determined by using the Cronbach Alpha method to compute the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded a coefficient alpha value of 0.80, which was high enough to be reliable. It was recommended that there should be employment of more qualified staff with the knowledge of TVET; there should be provision of basic technological facilities which would help to enhance TVET; there should be practical teaching of TVET; functional automated library system to enhance personal research should be provided and there should be provision of constant power supply in the institution.

**KEYWORDS:** Education; Technical Education; Vocational Education; TVET

### Introduction

Education is seen as a veritable tool in human development. It has different connotation from schooling. Education deals with the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties are trained and different skills are developed. On the other hand, schooling is just one medium through which education can be provided and made accessible. Education is also defined as the act or process of educating or applying discipline on the mind or a process of character transformation. Education is a dynamic instrument of change which is expected to affect or condition the social behaviour of the person being educated.

Gbadegesin (2010) defined education as that process of physical and mental culture whereby a man's personality is developed to the fullest as he identified literacy as the foundation on which an edifice of sound education may be built. Drawing distinction between education and literacy, he submitted that while literacy is an important aspect of education, it is not its equivalence and it may jeopardize the object of true education, which is the full development of the entire personality of a human being. By implication, education must be able to have an impact on both physical and mental outcome. By physical, the learner should have the ability to manipulate skills and produce results which can contribute to the need of the society in which he belongs. By mental, the learner's cognitive development during the process of acquisition should be such that can think differently to invent the things which have not existed around his environment and also bring innovation to those aspects of life which are needed for the survival and growth of the society which he belongs.

Education is a life-long process. It encompasses all aspects of life, be it physical, social or spiritual environment. It is a continuous process. Life is a continuous process of growth and development and so education is also a continuous process which begins from womb to tomb. An individual learns through his experiences, which are acquired throughout his life. Education is not merely collection of some information. It is acquisition of experiences through life in the social and natural environment. It is the development of all those capacities in an individual, which makes him to control his environment and fulfill his possibilities.

Education is a concept that does not lend itself to a clear-cut definition. This is because it is a lifelong process, starting before we begin school and ongoing for life. Its definition may also differ depending on the perspectives of those who are trying to define it. Leonard, Collins and Felix (2014) defined education as the development of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain and abilities of an individual for optimal function and performance in the society. The individual has to be helped to maximize his mental, emotional and psychological abilities which will be beneficial to him and the society in which he belongs. Itari and Ugbe (2018) defined education as a process of acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences. They further stressed that education is seen as all experience acquired in the process of living, acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitude and experiences

in institutions of learning and as a relatively organized learning activity intended to make some persons (be they adults, youths or children) learn. This presupposes that the teacher/facilitator, learner/student, content/ programme and method must be present in the learning situation.

TVET is meant to prepare beneficiaries for employment in recognized occupations by including skills, knowledge and attitude required for utilizing the natural resources needed for economic development of a nation and for their own self-improvement. It involves manual use of hands as practical skills, competencies and specific work habits that demand commitment, high articulation to design construct, maintain and repair technological goods. TVET ensures that all people have access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. An efficient TVET will ensure that this takes place. This will show when youths and adults in formal and informal education and training go through TVET. This does focus on the acquisition of foundational and higher-order skills; greater and more equitable access to technical and vocational education and training and higher education; training throughout life; and the knowledge, skills and values needed to function well and contribute to society.

TVET, according to Mar (2011), is defined as “an encompassing term referring to all areas of the educational process that, in addition to general education, involves:

- The study of technologies and other related sciences.
- The attainment of practical skills, knowledge, attitudes, and understanding relating to occupations in different sectors of social and economic life.
- A means of training for occupational engagements and for efficient participation in the labor world.
- An area of lifelong learning and training for effective citizenship.
- A tool for enhancing environmentally appropriate sustainable development.
- A method of improving poverty reduction.”

According to the UNESCO International Centre for TVET (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2019), “Technical and Vocational Education and Training is involved with the acquisition of skills, competencies, and knowledge for the world of work. TVET is an incredibly diverse sub-sector of education and training. It comprises formal, nonformal, and informal learning. It develops skills and knowledge from basic to advanced levels and shapes people’s attitudes. It takes place across a wide range of institutional settings, including schools, public and private vocational institutes, tertiary education institutions, community projects, at home, and in the workplace in both the formal and informal economies.” TVET harnesses and improves skills for innovation, working, lifelong learning, and living, as well as for a contribution to human, socio-economic, environmental, and technological aspects of development.

Similarly, TVET is structured as a set of approaches to learning, both to prepare students for the world-of work, for well-being later in adult life. Additionally, TVET can contribute significantly to skills development and also to human resource strategies and policies that are targeted to serve the different needs of the national and international labor markets. In particular, as the experience of numerous countries shows, successful TVET can serve as an effective function in skills development, both traditionally and in new trades and industries. It can also build societal, group, and individual re-adjustment after catastrophe and conflicts and strengthens resilience and social capital (Ogwu, 2018).

**Technical and vocational education is one of the easiest ways to get away from poverty and improve skill. In addition to achieving the following sustainable development goals: goal 4, goal 5, goal 8, goal 9 and goal 10. These include:**

- (1) end poverty in all its forms everywhere**
- (2) promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth**
- (3) full and productive employment and decent work for all**
- (4) reduce inequality within and among countries, ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all will be achieved with effective and efficient TVET (Ogwu, 2018).**

**All these SDGs and the main thrust of our education policies and regulatory framework in Nigeria will go a long way in assisting the human development of the society and the country. TVET is a planned program of courses and learning experiences that begin with exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills, and enables achievement of high academic standards, leadership, preparation for industry-defined work, and advanced and continuing education. The mandate of TVET is to provide individuals with learning experiences and training that equip them with skills to manipulate their natural environment and nurture development for their immediate community and the nation in general.**

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## Statement of the Problem

Vocational education programmes focus on the acquisition of appropriate skills, competencies and abilities necessary for individuals to adapt to real work situations and contribute to the development of society. TVET can be considered as a form of education that enables the learners acquire necessary skills and is used to solve problems using scientific knowledge. It is a means of acquiring work-related attitude, knowledge and skills in many aspects of working life. Unfortunately, despite all the glaring contributions of TVET, many institutions in Nigeria is yet to accord this type of education the attention it deserves. Bassey (2018), described TVET in Nigeria as having some major hindrances to its full implementation. Accordingly, these challenges include:

inadequate manpower to handle TVET effectively; lack of basic technological facilities to enhance TVET; less emphasis on the practicability of TVET; lack of adequate library facilities to enhance thorough research and lack of constant power supply. The status of TVET, which is already rapidly declining due to an unprecedented increase in technology, is in jeopardy. It is on the basis of the aforementioned issues that it becomes pertinent for the researchers to assess whether these problems still hamper the effective implementation of Technical Vocational Education and Training in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana.

## Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to assess the state of Technical Vocational Education and Training in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Investigate the challenges of Technical Vocational Education and Training in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana
2. Proffer solutions to the challenges of Technical Vocational Education and Training in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana

## Research Questions

The following research questions are raised for the study:

- What are the challenges of Technical Vocational Education and Training in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana?
- What are the solutions to the challenges of Technical Vocational Education and Training in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana?

## Methodology

The non-experimental design involving the descriptive research survey type was deployed for the purpose of this study. The population of this study consisted of 408 final year ND 2 students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ukana located in Essien Udim Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Due to the peculiarity of the individuals involved in the population of the study, judgmental sampling technique was used to select eighty two (82) respondents representing 20% of the entire population. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was developed by the researchers, entitled 'An Assessment of the State of Technical Vocational Education and Training in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana Questionnaire' (ASTVETFPQU). The questionnaire was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instruments was determined by using the Cronbach Alpha method to compute the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded a coefficient alpha value of 0.80, which was high enough to be reliable. The instrument for data collection was administered to the respondents by the three researchers, thus, there was no need to deploy the services of a research assistant. All the questionnaires were completed and returned to the researchers. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. For the mean, values higher than 2.5 were considered significant while values below 2.5 were rejected.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What are the challenges of TVET in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana?

**Table: Mean Ratings of Respondents on Challenges of TVET**

S/N	ITEMS	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
1.	Inadequate manpower to handle TVET effectively	82	3.22	.77
2.	Lack of basic technological facilities to enhance TVET	82	3.02	.74
3.	Less emphasis on the practicability of TVET	82	3.20	.73
4.	Lack of adequate library facilities to enhance thorough research	82	3.07	.83
5.	Lack of constant power supply	82	2.98	.75
Valid N		82		

The data presented above shows the mean ratings of respondents on challenges of TVET in enhancing equitable quality education. Using the criterion mean of 2.50, the analysis of data shows that the respondents agreed that all the five items listed were challenges of TVET in enhancing learning in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana. More so, the table indicates from the overall mean that, inadequate manpower to handle TVET effectively has the highest mean rating of 3.22. On the other hand, lack of constant power supply was ranked with the lowest mean of 2.98. Also, the standard deviation indicated in the table shows that, the scores within lack of adequate library facilities to enhance thorough research (.83) had the greatest value as compared to other items in the table as analyzed. It was therefore deduced that the problems mentioned above are obviously impeding TVET in enhancing learning in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana.

**Research Question 2:** What are the solutions to the challenges of TVET Federal Polytechnic, Ukana?

**Table: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Solutions to the Challenges of TVET**

S/N	ITEMS	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
1.	Employment of more qualified staff with the knowledge of TVET	82	3.04	.58
2.	The government should provide basic technological facilities which would help to enhance TVET	82	3.13	.60
3.	TVET should be handled more practically	82	3.24	.58
4.	There should be a functional automated library system to enhance personal research	82	3.09	.55
5.	There should be a constant power supply in the institution	82	3.16	.62
Valid N		82		

The data presented above reveals mean ratings of respondents on the solutions to the challenges of TVET. Using the criterion mean of 2.50, the respondents accepted that all the items are the solutions to the challenges of TVET in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana. This is because their mean values were greater than the criterion mean adopted in the study. Furthermore, the overall mean showed that lack of fund for developing library programmes with mean value of 3.64 is ranked highest. On the other hand, the standard deviation indicated in the table shows that scores suggesting that there should be a constant power supply in the institution (.62) had the greatest dispersion as compared to other items.

## Discussion of Findings

The analyzed result shows that there is a high level of agreement on the various problems associated with TVET. The study indicates that the problems are: inadequate manpower to handle TVET effectively; lack of basic technological facilities to enhance TVET; less emphasis on the practicability of TVET; lack of adequate library facilities to enhance thorough research and lack of constant power supply were ranked very high in the data. This goes in line with Bassey (2023) who identified inadequacy of buildings of innovation centres and classroom blocks, inconsistency of power supply, insufficient laboratory equipment and outdated library facilities as problems hampering the effective implementation of TVET. The researchers have accepted that these problems exist and that if not eliminated will adversely affect TVET in enhancing learning in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana.

The findings revealed that employment of more qualified staff with the knowledge of TVET; provision of basic technological facilities which would help to enhance TVET; practical teaching of TVET; functional automated library system to enhance personal research and constant power supply in the institution as perceived solutions to the challenges of TVET. Okoni (2020) recommended that more experts who handle TVET should be employed; up-to-date library facilities should be provided; emphasis should be laid on practical aspects of TVET and provision of constant availability of power supply. This infers that the problems mentioned above could be surmounted by adopting the aforementioned suggested solutions to TVET in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana.

## Conclusion

**TVET is a planned program of courses and learning experiences that begin with exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills, and enables achievement of high academic standards, leadership, preparation for industry-defined work, and advanced and continuing education. The mandate of TVET is to provide individuals with learning experiences and training that equip them with skills to manipulate their natural environment and nurture development for their immediate community and the nation in general.** Though such knowledge is still but struggling to survive as a result of the glaring setbacks because of inadequate manpower to handle TVET effectively; lack of basic technological facilities to enhance TVET; less emphasis on the practicability of TVET; lack of adequate library facilities to enhance thorough research and lack of constant power supply. To this end, it is in order to conclude that employment of more qualified staff with the knowledge of TVET; provision of basic technological facilities which would help to enhance TVET; practical teaching of TVET; functional automated library system to enhance personal research and constant power supply in the institution will proffer solutions to the challenges of TVET in Federal Polytechnic, Ukana.

## Recommendations

Base on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- The management of the institution should employ more qualified staff who are well grounded with the knowledge of TVET.
- The government should make provision for basic technological facilities to the institution which would help to enhance TVET.
- TVET should be taught practically to enhance its effectiveness as theories alone would not bring its dearth.
- The government through deliberate investment in Polytechnics should provide a functional automated library system to enhance personal research of students
- The government should ensure that there is constant power supply which would increase the efficacy of TVET in the institution
- TVET should be seen as a process that is capable of transforming citizens with creative problem-solving skills, scientific and social literacy and commitment to engage in profitable venture which will make every category of person productive and important.

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