



# DEVELOPING DIVERSIFIED ACTION PLANS FOR QUALITY TVET PROGRAMMES TO EMPOWER YOUTH WITH INDUSTRY-READY SKILLS IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

*The unemployment rate among TVET graduates in Nigeria has worsened due to a discrepancy between the skills industries demand and those that TVET institutions offer students. This study aims to examine diversified action plans developed by tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria to promote quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes, with the goal of empowering youth with industry-ready skills for employment. The study used a survey research design and collected data from 462 TVET lecturers without sampling. A self-developed questionnaire with a four-point rating scale was used to collect data. The instrument was validated and found to be reliable. Data analysis included arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and t-tests. The findings revealed that TVET lecturers disagree that sustainable TVET financing schemes, TVET-private sector collaboration, and investment in TVET lecturers' capacity building are developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment. Ownership of institution and years of experience influenced TVET lecturers' perceptions. The researcher concluded that diversified action plans are not adequately developed in TVET institutions to promote the quality of the programme. It was recommended that TVET management in tertiary institutions establish small-scale business ventures to generate revenue and support programme delivery, allowing for the provision of new teaching facilities and equipment and improving student learning and acquisition of entrepreneurship skills.'*

**Keywords:** Diversification, Action Plan, Quality TVET, Industry-ready Skills

## Introduction

Nations around the world are discovering the value of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes to economic and technological growths. Industrialized countries such as Japan, China, the United States, Germany, and South Korea, among others, have continued to place a high value on strengthening their TVET institutions for more efficient production of highly trained labour. TVET not only helps industrialized countries advance economically, it also helps underdeveloped countries such as Nigeria achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Onwusa, 2021).

Nigeria is the most populous Black nation in the world, and ranks first in Africa and sixth globally in terms of population, with population of 216 million (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022). Furthermore, Nigeria boasts the world's highest youth population, with nearly 70% of its population under 30 years and 42% under 15 years old. Without a doubt, Nigeria's massive population should be an added advantage in terms of achieving development compared to many Sub-Sahara African countries (Pontianus and Oruonye, 2021). Additionally, Nigeria's sizable youth population should be an economic asset that contributes to economic growth. However, like other Sub-Saharan African countries, Nigeria struggles with youth unemployment and poverty. According to the report of National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), in 2020, 13.9 million young people in Nigeria were unemployed, 19.61 million 2021, and over 80 million of Nigeria's 151 million youngsters unemployed in 2022 (NBS, 2020, 2021 and 2022).

The Nigerian governments recognize that TVET programme, which is beyond mere acquisition of certificates are required to address youth unemployment and poverty. Okoye (2015) stated that, TVET places more emphasis on youths' acquisition of skills, and how well to apply them in real-world workplace. TVET is oriented towards the workplaces and its curriculum focuses on acquisition of employable skills therefore narrowing the gap between educational institutions, industry, and labour market. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2014), TVET is the component of education that results in the development of fundamental scientific knowledge, practical and applied skills, and both. It is intended to make it easier for youth to create successful careers in many occupations (Oviawe, 2020).

The Nigerian industries are constantly in need of TVET graduates who possess industry-ready skills for decent work. Industry-ready skills include; communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, ICT, information literacy, creativity, and workplace skills (Sarma, 2022). TVET needs to be strengthened for more efficiency in operation to equip youth with industry-ready skills. Promoting TVET quality requires creating diversified action plans that take into account both national and international best practices. Diversified action plans demonstrates a move away from outdated, homogenous, and rigid TVET delivery systems toward a flexible one that can satisfy the shifting skills requirements of modern industries. The quality of TVET programme can be promoted through developing effective school-private sector cooperation, implementing sustainable alternative funding strategies, sustaining staff skills training and development, effective monitoring and evaluation of TVET programme performance, and Competency Based Training (CBT) programmes (African Union, 2017).

Given the high costs of materials, equipment, and facilities, TVET delivery is more expensive than general education. In Nigeria, TVET institutions are largely underfinanced due to decreasing government funding (UNESCO, 2017). TVET institutions in Nigerian are under huge

pressure to find new sources of income. Building sustainable alternative financing schemes involves raising funds by establishing small scale businesses (cybercafés, photocopying and printing businesses, opening of bookshops, car wash businesses, food canteen (eatery), and chair and canopy rent services). Other potential financing schemes are through alumni associations, award ceremonies, alumni reunions, endowment funds, capital campaigns, fundraising, the creation of intellectual property, and research-based marketing among others.

Similarly, TVET institutions are aware of the importance of creating strong partnerships with the private sector in order to achieve market-driven programmes (UNESCO, 2020). Collaboration between the private sector and TVET programme can help students acquire needed skills for workforce; decrease skills mismatch with labour market, and enable students gain practical experience to transition to workforce. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2018) stated that the benefits of TVET-private sector collaboration include industries providing; training to TVET students on current and relevant skills, attachment facilities for students, industry visitation opportunities for students to gain practical knowledge and industry exposure, and modern facilities and equipment for effective teaching and learning in TVET programme.

To promote the quality of TVET programme further, TVET institutions must engage in capacity building of lecturers. Capacity building of TVET lecturers can facilitate quick transition from teacher-centered to learner-centered pedagogy that promotes students acquisition of skills (Asogwa, Isiwu & Panebi, 2016). Capacity building of TVET lecturers according to Akuegwu, Nwi-ue, and Etudor-Eyo (2013) can be in form of regular workshops, seminars, conferences, short courses, mentoring, and ICT training programmes. Others capacity building programmes are regular supervision to ensure TVET lecturers update their skills; sponsoring TVET lecturers for further studies, organizing study tours for TVET lecturers, and providing a rigorous support system for TVET lecturers in area of content development, and social interactions.

Despite the existence of TVET programmes, poverty and unemployment remain major problems in Nigeria, according to UNESCO (2015). The fact that many skills possess by youths are no longer relevant in the current labour market have been regretted by Okoye (2015). Similar to this, Serdyukov (2017) stated that due to limited funding, a lack of qualified and competent teaching staff, and a lack of private sector involvement in the TVET programme, TVET has not been significantly progressive in equipping youth with industry-ready skills. Additionally, Masa'udu (2016) identified lack of funds as a significant issue for the TVET sector, highlighting the need for alternative funding sources to purchase modern training equipment and facilities as well as to train and retrain TVET lecturers whose quality and competency are seriously being questioned.

Ownership of tertiary institutions (federal government-owned and state-owned tertiary) may have an influence on the development of diversified action plans to strengthen TVET programme to empower students with industry-ready skills. Due to disparities in budgetary allocations, quality, and competency of TVET lecturers in the institutions, and method of operations, there may be differences in the development of sustainable TVET financing schemes, TVET-private sector collaboration, and investment in TVET lecturers' capacity building between federal and state institutions. In comparison to state-owned tertiary institutions, which have limited funding, TVET at federal owned institutions in Nigeria may receive greater support from the federal government, which may have an impact on the drive to diversify financing schemes as

well as develop synergy with private sectors. Similarly, TVET lecturers could differ in their opinion on diversified action plans developed by TVET institutions to promote the quality training of youth on industry-ready skills based on years of experience on the job. Based on this background, this study was conducted to determine diversified action plans developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' industry-ready skills for employment in South-East, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In order to provide training to the Nigerian youth to enable them gain skills to take advantage of employment prospects, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme was included into Nigerian higher education. The fact that so many youth who graduate from TVET institutions in Nigerian still struggle to find meaningful employment, is concerning. This situation has been attributed to the fact that most youth lack adequate industry-ready skills, rendering them unemployable. Similar to this, Nigerian employers of labour, particularly in the South East, regret that most skills possessed by graduates are out of date with the current labour market. As a consequence, they incur huge cost in training and retraining hired graduates. Youths' unhappiness at not being able to find suitable employment after graduation has contributed to their turning to drug trafficking, prostitution, armed robberies, cybercrimes, and other forms of survival. The quality of instruction offered in TVET institutions in South East, Nigeria, may be responsible for the low industry-ready skills of youth.

The industry-ready skills that youth need for employment today are evolving and getting more sophisticated. This suggests that TVET programmes must continuously develop action plans to promote and sustain its quality assurance. The issue with this study is that the researcher's preliminary/cursory observations showed that some TVET institutions in South East, Nigeria do not appear to have diversified action plans to promote the quality of their training programme. The researcher is worried that, if TVET is unable to promote the quality of its programme through effective diversification, the already poor skills preparation of youth could deteriorate further.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study therefore is to determine:

1. The sustainable financing schemes developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills acquisition for employment.
2. The effective TVET-private sector collaboration developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment.
3. Capacity building programmes provided for TVET lecturers to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What are the sustainable alternative financing schemes developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment in South East, Nigeria?
2. What is TVET-private sector collaboration developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment in South East, Nigeria?

3. What capacity building programmes are provided for TVET lecturers to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment in South East, Nigeria?

## Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on sustainable alternative financing schemes developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on ownership of institution (federal/state).
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on TVET-private sector collaboration developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on ownership of institution (federal/state).
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on capacity building programmes provided for TVET lecturers to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on years of experience (1-5 years/ 6 years and above).

## Method

This study adopted survey research design. It was carried out in South-East, Nigeria. The population of 462 TVET lecturers in tertiary institutions offering TVET programmes in South East, Nigeria was studied without sampling. The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire titled "Diversified Action Plans to Promote TVET Quality for Youth Industry-Ready Skills Acquisition for Employment (DAPTVETQ-IRSAE)". The questionnaire consisted of two sections; A and B. Section A contained two items on demographic information of the respondents such as ownership of institution and years of experience while Section B contained 18 items in respect to the three research questions and structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, , and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. Face and content validity of the instrument was determined using the opinions of two experts from Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation Unit.

The reliability of the instrument was established using trail-test method and data collected were calculated with Cronbach Alpha which yielded coefficient values of .78, .86 and .88 for clusters B1 and B3 respectively with an overall reliability value of .84 obtained. The researcher with the help of five research assistants adequately briefed administered copies of the questionnaire to TVET lecturers in their institutions. On the spot distribution and collection of questionnaires was deployed and those who did not fill theirs immediately were revisited on another agreed date. Out of 462 copies of questionnaire distributed, 451 copies were correctly filled and returned, which were used for data analysis. Statistical mean and standard deviation were used to answer the researcher questions and determined the homogeneity of respondents' views while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A hypothesis was rejected where the p - value is less than alpha value. Otherwise, the null hypothesis was accepted. The data analysis was carried out using statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.



## Results

### Research Question 1

What are the sustainable alternative financing schemes developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment in South East, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings and standard deviation on sustainable alternative financing schemes developed to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment**

S/N	Items on Sustainable Alternative Financing Schemes	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
My Department:				
1	operates business centres (photocopying, printing, bindings services) that generate income to the department	2.57	.52	Agree
2	operates car wash businesses to generate funds to support TVET programme	1.67	.68	Disagree
3	Establish production units to produce goods and services for income generation	1.44	.80	Strongly Disagree
4	Organizes award nights to generate funds to support TVET programme	1.59	.68	Disagree
5	Creates Intellectual property for raising funds for TVET programme	1.68	.74	Disagree
6	Has built up lock up shops for rent as a means of generating income	2.39	.71	Disagree
7	raises income to support TVET delivery through private donations	2.64	.65	Agree
8	raises funds to support TVET delivery through research-based marketing	2.47	.79	Disagree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>2.06</b>		<b>Disagree</b>

Data in Table 1 revealed that TVET lecturers disagree that sustainable alternative financing schemes are developed in TVET departments to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment in South East, Nigeria. This is shown by the cluster mean of 2.06 which fell

within the disagree category. The item by item analysis reveals that that out of eight items listed on sustainable alternative financing schemes for promoting youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment, items 1 and 7 are rated agree with mean score of 2.57 and 2.64, items 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8 with mean scores ranged between 1.59 and 2.47 are rated disagreed while the remaining one item (item3) was rated strongly disagree. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

## Research Question 2

What is TVET-private sector collaboration developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment in South East, Nigeria?

**Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings and standard deviation on TVET-private sector collaboration developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment**

S/N	Items on TVET-Private Sector Collaboration	X	SD	Remarks
1	Industries provide TVET students chance to visit their factories to gain practical experience	2.24	.65	Disagree
2	My department invites industrial experts to train students on skills for using industrial equipment	1.46	.61	Strongly Disagree
3	Industries provide modern teaching and learning equipment to my department to promote quality training	2.12	.78	Disagree
4	Industries are involved in developing TVET programmes and policies	1.81	.91	Disagree
5	Industries provide SIWES attachment facilities for TVET students	2.65	.76	Agree
6	TVET lecturers carry out their sabbatical leaves in industries to update their technical skills	1.48	.61	Strongly Disagree
7	Industries give TVET graduates special consideration during recruitment	2.46	.83	Disagree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>2.03</b>		<b>Disagree</b>

Data in Table 2 show that TVET lecturers disagree that TVET-private sector collaboration is developed in their institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment in South East, Nigeria. This is shown by the cluster mean of 2.03 which fell within the disagree category. Item by item analysis show that item 5 is rated agree with mean score of

2.65, items 9, 11, 12 and 15 with mean scores ranging from 1.81 to 2.46 are rated disagree while the remaining two items (items 10 and 14) are rated strongly disagree with mean scores of 1.46 and 1.48. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

### Research Questions 3

What capacity building programmes are provided to TVET lecturers to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment in South East, Nigeria?

**Table 3: Respondents' mean ratings and standard deviation on capacity building programmes provided to TVET lecturers to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment**

S/N	Items on Capacity Building Programmes	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
My department:				
1	organizes regular workshops for lecturers to update skills	2.74	.65	Agree
2	sponsors lecturers to international conferences outside Nigeria to update skills	1.56	.61	Disagree
3	creates a platform for attachment with industries so lecturers gain first-hand knowledge in the skills needed by the labour markets	2.12	.78	Disagree
4	organizes regular seminars for lecturers	2.81	.91	Agree
5	organizes study tours for lecturers	1.45	.76	Strongly Disagree
6	sets up a system or training programme in companies for all TVET lecturers	1.68	.61	Disagree
7	provides mentoring programmes for lecturers	2.86	.83	Agree
8	provides ICT training programmes for lecturers to update their skills in using ICTs in teaching	2.64	.67	Agree
9	provides a rigorous support system for lecturers in content development	2.22	.59	Disagree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>2.23</b>		<b>Disagree</b>



Data in Table 3 show that TVET lecturers disagree that capacity building programmes are provided to lecturers to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment in South East, Nigeria. This is shown by the cluster mean of 2.03 which fell within the disagree category. Item by item analysis show that items 16, 19, 22 and 23 are rated agree with mean scores ranging from 2.64 to 2.86, items 17, 18, 21 and 24 with mean scores ranging from 1.56 to 2.22 are rated disagree while item 20 is rated strongly disagree with mean scores of 1.45. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of respondents on sustainable alternative financing schemes developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on ownership of institution (federal/state).

**Table 4: Summary of t-test comparison of the mean perceptions of respondents on sustainable alternative financing schemes developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on ownership of institution**

Ownership of Institution	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Federal	274	1.56	.66				
State	188	1.83	.71				
	469	2.17	.07				Not Significant

Table 4 shows that the t-value of 2.17 with 469 degree of freedom has p-value of .07 which is greater than the alpha level of .05 ( $P\text{-value} = .07 > .05$ ). This means that there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of TVET lecturers on sustainable alternative financing schemes developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on ownership of institution. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

### Hypothesis 2

There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of respondents on TVET-private sector collaboration developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on ownership of institution (federal/state).

**Table 5: Summary of t-test comparison of the mean perceptions of respondents on TVET-private sector collaboration developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on ownership of institution**

Ownership of Institution	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Federal	274	2.16	.49				
State	188	1.92	.65				
	469	1.20	1.01				Not Significant

Table 5 shows that the t-value of 1.20 with 469 degree of freedom has p-value of 1.01 which is greater than the alpha level of .05 ( $P\text{-value} = 1.01 > .05$ ). This means that there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of respondents on TVET-private sector collaboration

developed by TVET institutions to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on ownership of institution. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

### Hypothesis 3

There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of respondents on capacity building programmes provided for TVET lecturers to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on years of experience (1-5 years/ 6 years and above).

**Table 6: Summary of t-test comparison of the mean perceptions of respondents on capacity building programmes provided for TVET lecturers to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on years of experience**

Years of Experience	N	X	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
1-5 years	175	1.98	.87	469	1.81	.09	Not Significant
6 years and above	287	2.10	.82				

Table 6 show that the t-value of 1.81 with 469 degree of freedom has p-value of .09 which is greater than the alpha level of .05 ( $P\text{-value} = .09 > .05$ ). Since the p-value is greater than the significant value, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This means that there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of respondents on capacity building programmes provided for TVET lecturers to promote youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment based on years of experience.

### Discussion of Findings

The study's findings showed that TVET lecturers do not agree that sustainable alternative financing schemes are developed in TVET departments to support youths' acquisition of employable skills for work in South East, Nigeria. Particularly, the data showed that TVET departments do not start car wash businesses, create production units to provide goods and services, or earn money to support TVET delivery through research-based marketing. The results of this study concur with those of Edokpolor and Imafidon (2017), who found that a significant barrier to the effectiveness of training in TVET programmes in Nigeria is a lack of funding. This corroborates the prior finding made by Ekpenyong and Edokpolor (2015) that insufficient funding for TVET results in a lack of teaching and non-teaching staff, workshops, laboratories, and studios, which negatively impacts the development of young people who are talented and competent. Despite having access to a variety of funding options, public tertiary schools in Nigeria only get funding from the federal and state governments claimed Famurewa (2014).

The study's findings also showed that TVET lecturers disagree with the idea that TVET-private sector collaboration developed in TVET departments to support youths' acquisition of employability-ready skills in South East Nigeria. The researcher is surprised by this result given the advantages of TVET programmes and private partnerships. However, this might be attributed

to TVET administrators' lack of knowledge about the advantages of industrial collaboration, their general lack of challenge, or their lethargy in forging fruitful partnerships with the business community. In agreement, Serdyukov (2017) pointed out that the private sector was not actively involved in the implementation of TVET in Nigeria. The absence of effective TVET-industry collaboration in Nigeria, which has an impact on programme quality assurance, has been regretted by the National Board of Technical Education (2014).

The study's results also revealed that TVET lecturers do not agree that capacity building programmes are provided to lecturers to support youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills in the South East of Nigeria. Despite the fact that TVET departments set up workshops, conferences, seminars, mentoring programs, and ICT courses for TVET lecturers, the findings show that they do not fund their travel to international conferences, provide a platform for industry attachment so that lecturers can gain first-hand experience and knowledge, arrange study tours for lecturers, or give them a strict support system for content development and student engagement. According to Oviawe (2020), TVET professors at Nigerian tertiary institutions need to be developed through programs that increase their capacity. Okoye (2015) previously noted that a lack of master plan in TVET institutions for training and developing teaching personnel is the reason why many TVET instructors in Nigeria are incompetent. With regards to the three null hypotheses tested, findings showed that ownership of institution and years of experience did not influence TVET lecturers' opinions on sustainable alternative financing schemes, TVET-private sector collaboration, and capacity building programmes developed for TVET lecturers to promote youth acquisition of industry-ready skills for employment.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that diversified action plans are still not adequately developed in TVET institutions to promote the quality of the programme for youths' acquisition of industry-ready skills.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) management in tertiary institutions in South east, Nigeria should step up efforts to establish small-scale business ventures within, and outside of the school to produce consistent revenue to support programme delivery. This will allow them to provide new and modern teaching facilities and equipment required in the department, resulting in improved student learning and the acquisition of skills for employment.
2. Administrators of TVET programme should develop effective plans that can promote private sector participation in TVET delivery. This synergy will help to improve the quality assurance of TVET programmes in tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria.
3. Administrators of TVET programmes in tertiary institutions in South east, Nigeria should plan capacity building programmes for TVET lecturers to able them continuously up-date their skills and knowledge for quality training of youths in industry-ready skills for employment.
4. TVET programmes need to be re-organizing, re-modelling, and diversifying for effectiveness

## Further Research

The researchers recommend that further research should be carried out on;

1. Strategies for developing inclusive TVET skills model towards enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of youth for job creation in South East, Nigeria.
2. Promoting effective collegiality models in TVET institutions to promote skills development among youth for gainful employment in South East, Nigeria.

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