

The Social Impact of TVET Programs on Youth Development in Bayelsa State

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Abstract

Youth restiveness is a societal menace that brings negative vices to the persons concerned and society at large. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is an important instrument for promoting youth development through skills acquisition, employment, entrepreneurship, poverty reduction, and social inclusion. This paper examines the social impact of TVET programs on youth development in Bayelsa State. The study adopted a mixed-methods design, combining questionnaire surveys with interviews. A sample of 56 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling from TVET trainees, graduates, instructors, employers, and youth development officials. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and One-way ANOVA with SPSS Version 23. Findings revealed that TVET has the potential to contribute meaningfully to youth development, with respondents affirming a strong relationship between vocational skills and empowerment (Mean = 4.30). However, effectiveness was hampered by inadequate career guidance and geographical barriers (Mean = 4.45), weak industry links (Mean = 3.86), and inadequate training facilities (Mean = 3.46). ANOVA results showed significant differences in how age groups perceived TVET's impact ($p = 0.014$) and how designations perceived challenges ($p = 0.002$). The study recommends community-based training centres, private-sector partnerships, accessible start-up capital, and public awareness campaigns to maximize TVET's social impact and reduce youth restiveness in Bayelsa State.

Background to the Study

Youth development is a fundamental component of sustainable social and economic progress. Young people constitute a vital human resource whose knowledge, creativity, energy, and productive capacities can significantly contribute to national development when appropriate opportunities are made available. However, in many developing economies, the lack of these opportunities leads to high rates of unemployment, poverty, and social vices. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) involves education and training designed to develop occupational competencies, practical skills, technical knowledge, and professional attitudes required for particular trades and industries. According to Okwori (2010); Attah, Ujevbe, and Ogguuo (2020), TVET is one of the most effective avenues to enhance productivity, wealth creation, and poverty alleviation for individuals and society at large. It is specifically aimed at preparing people for self-employment and self-reliance.

The urgency of TVET is underscored by global employment trends. The International Labour Organization (ILO) asserted that Africa has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment globally, with the youth unemployment rate standing at around 20% in 2020. These conditions of unemployment and poverty present significant threats to global peace and prosperity, a position reaffirmed by UNESCO-UNEVOC and World Skills during the 2023 World Youth Skills Day event on empowering youths for the future. As noted by Attah et al. (2020), TVET is a crucial tool not only for overcoming poverty but also for limiting the occurrence of social vices caused by joblessness, thereby promoting a culture of peace and freedom. Furthermore, TVET ensures equal access to skill-building opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds, which is crucial for promoting social and economic equity. Alhasan and Abdullahi (2013) further emphasized that TVET plays a vital role in improving the well-being of youths and their communities. It increases productivity, empowers individuals to become self-reliant, and stimulates entrepreneurial development. It serves as a handy tool to diversify the skills of youths for self-actualization, train them to value their handwork, and promote growth through self-employment rather than total reliance on the government.

Despite these potentials, the context in Bayelsa State and the broader Niger Delta region of Nigeria presents unique and complex challenges. The region has become a global concern due to environmental degradation, pollution (land, air, and water) from oil and gas exploration, poverty, underdevelopment, high unemployment, and ecological disasters such as flooding and erosion (Nyenke, 2022). While the oil and gas sector dominates the state's economy, it does not automatically guarantee that young people possess the specialized skills required to access available jobs. Furthermore, young people in riverine communities face geographical barriers that limit their access to training centers, markets, and employment opportunities. Therefore, this research work seeks to ascertain the social impact of TVET programs on youth development in Bayelsa State. By examining the role of TVET in fostering self-reliance, this study will provide empirical evidence on how skills acquisition can improve the livelihood of youths and reduce restiveness in the study area.

Problem Statement and Justification

TVET is designed to equip youths with practical skills for self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and social inclusion (Alhasan & Abdullahi, 2013). However, in Bayelsa State, this ideal is undermined by high youth unemployment, poverty, and persistent restiveness, exacerbated by environmental degradation and geographical barriers that limit access to economic opportunities (Nyenke, 2022). Recognizing these challenges, the government and stakeholders have invested heavily in various TVET and youth empowerment programs across the Niger Delta (Attah et al., 2020).

Despite these interventions, youth restiveness and reliance on government patronage remain rampant. This reveals a critical missing gap: the mere provision of TVET programs does not guarantee measurable social outcomes. There is a disconnect between the skills acquired in training centers and the actual socio-economic realities of the state, worsened by inadequate facilities, limited start-up finance, and weak industry links (Ogur, 2023). This research was therefore undertaken to bridge this gap by empirically assessing the actual social impact of TVET on youth development in Bayelsa State. The study is justified as it will provide evidence-based data for policymakers to optimize TVET delivery, thereby transforming it into a practical tool for youth self-reliance, peace, and security in the Niger Delta (Emeli, 2021).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the social impact of TVET programs on youth development in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- (i) Ascertain the impact of Technical and Vocational Skills on Youth Development in Bayelsa State.
- (ii) Examine the contribution of TVET to social inclusion, gender equality, and community development in the study area.
- (iii) Identify the major challenges affecting the effectiveness of TVET programs in Bayelsa State (such as inadequate facilities, limited finance, and weak industry links).
- (iv) Provide evidence-based recommendations for improving the social impact of TVET on youth development in the study area.

Literature Review

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Programs.

According to Ogur (2023), Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) refer to educational and training programs that focus on providing students with practical skills and knowledge that are relevant to specific trades, occupations, or vocations. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) play a crucial role in promoting economic development and sustainable development. Here are a few ways in which TVET can contribute to these goals according to Kibet and Kibet, 2019;

1. TVET provides individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to enter the workforce and be productive members of society. This helps to increase labour productivity and competitiveness, which can drive economic growth and development

2. TVET programs can help to address skills shortages and mismatches in the labour market, which can lead to increased employment and economic opportunities for individuals and communities (Ogur, 2023):
3. TVET can help to improve social mobility and reduce poverty by providing disadvantaged individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to access better-paying jobs and improve their economic prospects.
4. TVET programs can also contribute to sustainable development by helping to train individuals in trades and occupations that are in demand in the green economy, such as renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. This can help to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and promote environmentally-sustainable practices (Paryono, 2017; Ogur, 2023).
5. TVET can also promote gender equality by providing women and men with equal access to education and training opportunities, which can help to reduce gender-based barriers to employment and improve economic opportunities for all (Fien et al., 2010; Ogur, 2023).

Wu (2023), opinioned on Deepening the Reform of Modern Vocational Education System Construction and the need to adhere to the promoting of production through education, assisting teaching through production, integrating production and education, promoting cooperation between production and education, and facilitating the formation of a modern vocational education structure and regional layout that is compatible with market demand and industry structure.

TVET and Economic Development

Pavlova (2009); Michaud (2018); Ogur (2023) technical and vocational education and training (TVET) plays a crucial role in the development of a skilled labour force, which can contribute to economic growth in several ways: TVET programs provide individuals with the practical skills and knowledge they need to enter the workforce and be productive members of society. This helps to increase labour productivity and competitiveness, which can drive economic growth and development. TVET can help to address skills shortages and mismatches in the labour market, which can lead to increased employment and economic opportunities for individuals and communities. When there is a sufficient supply of skilled workers, businesses can operate more efficiently and effectively, which can drive economic growth. TVET programs can also help to foster innovation and entrepreneurship by providing individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to start and grow their own businesses. This can create new economic opportunities and contribute to economic growth. TVET can also help to improve social mobility and reduce poverty by providing disadvantaged individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to access better-paying jobs and improve their economic prospects. This can help to reduce income inequality and contribute to more inclusive economic growth. TVET programs can also contribute to the development of a highly skilled labour force by providing ongoing professional development and training opportunities for existing workers. This can help to keep workers up-to-date with the latest industry trends and technologies, which can improve their productivity and competitiveness (Ervasti & Kupila, 2013; Ogur (2023).

Bayelsa State presents a different context for TVET. Its economic activities are connected with oil and gas, fisheries, agriculture, trading, construction, transportation, hospitality, and public services. The state also contains riverine and rural communities where geographical barriers can affect access to education, training, markets, and employment. Although oil and gas activities create economic opportunities, their presence does not automatically guarantee that young people possess the specialised skills required to access available jobs. Young people may need technical training, recognised qualifications, practical experience, workplace safety knowledge, and relevant industry connections. At the same time, opportunities exist in occupations that support local livelihoods. These include fish farming, fish processing, cold-chain management, boat-engine repairs, electrical installation, solar energy systems, welding and fabrication, building construction, digital services, and food processing.

TVET can help young people acquire the competencies required to participate in these activities. Its social value extends beyond employment to include personal independence, self-confidence, household welfare, gender inclusion, community participation, and the development of productive relationships.

Paul (2017) highlighted the relevance of entrepreneurship education and the need to encourage young people to consider self-employment rather than relying exclusively on paid government jobs. Werighakeme and Nwoke (2025) highlighted one challenge in his study is the possible mismatch between the competencies young people acquire in educational institutions and the skills required by employers and businesses.

In Bayelsa State, the situation requires particular attention because of the geographical areas. Young people in riverine communities may encounter transport difficulties, limited access to training centres, and barriers to reaching employment markets. Others may have technical skills but lack the capital, equipment, business knowledge, or professional networks required to establish viable enterprises. An effective TVET system should reflect both national occupational standards and local economic Opportunities.

Youth Development and TVET Social Sustainability in Nigeria

Youth development involves the acquisition of abilities, resources, relationships, and opportunities that enable young people to participate meaningfully in society. It includes economic outcomes, such as employment and income, as well as social outcomes, such as self-confidence, leadership, cooperation, and civic participation.

Emeli (2021) examined automobile-related TVET and youth development in Bayelsa State. The study focuses on specific vocational field and the potential contribution of technical training to employment and youth empowerment. Kolokolo (2025) investigated technology-based youth empowerment initiatives in Bayelsa State. The study provided a foundation for considering the relationship between skills development and youth empowerment. Amadi and Ebiowei (2025) examined awareness and access to youth empowerment initiatives among young people in Ogbia Local

Government Area of Bayelsa State. It emphasized the relevant to understanding access to youth development opportunities. According to Favour and Nwoke (2025) TVET addresses the relationship between vocational training and labour-market opportunities.

According to Patrick and Ikutal (2015) TVET aims to promote the social inclusion of young people of ethnic, religious, educational and social economic diversity with vocational skills. Reducing unemployment among youths is a major concern of TVET in Nigeria. The youths are Nigeria's greatest hope for the future and it is essential that they have real job opportunities through vocational training and job creation programmes. TVET offers training to young people in skills set including auto mechanic, building, metal work, wood work, plumbing, fitting, electrical work, business, home economics and agricultural studies among others. A key aspect of youth empowerment is enabling the youths to gain useful skills with which they could be gainfully self-employed. TVET can help young people acquire the skills they need in life.

Youths are a significant target population for development programs, and they possess a strong potential to effect change in communities worldwide. Because youth comprise a significant percentage of the global population, they present a prime target for community development programs, as there is a great opportunity to change the pattern of a community by breaking the cycle of poverty at its roots. The United Nations World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond, has identified ten important priorities for youth: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, the environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure activities, girls and young women, and full effective participation in society and decision-making (International Council on National Youth Policy, 2001). Entwistle (2008); Newo et al (2023). Youth Development is the approach that emphasizes the importance of young people to physically, academically, socially, and emotionally to help them build relationships, competencies, and confidence they need to succeed in life.

Empowering of youths through TEVT is as important as securing the environment and curtailing youths restiveness. The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is made up of; Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo Ondo and Rivers States. They constitute the third largest wetland in the world (UNDP, 2006). The ecological status of the region is characterized by; rivers, creeks, estuaries and swamps, as well as other natural resources like; palm oil and kernel, fish, oil and gas. The economic pre-occupation of the people of Bayelsa has been farming and fishing, hand-dug boat making and distillation of local gin. The availability of oil and gas in the State attracted several oil and gas Multinational Companies such as Chevron, Shell and Mobil producing (Exxon Mobil) to its major Local Government and cities like; Nembe, Oporoma, Yanagoa and the rest. Precisely, the oil and gas deposit in the Niger Delta region constitutes 97% of Nigeria's mineral exploitation and exploration (Iyayi, 2004). The State, due to its coastal location, and the exploration and exploitation activities carried out there, is highly vulnerable to both natural and man-made environmental hazards such as, flooding due

to rise in sea level, land degradation, water pollution, desertification, fire disasters and frequent oil spill. In fact, the activities of oil and gas multinational companies in the Niger Delta are largely viewed to be a curse rather than a blessing as nature intended it to be (Turner & Brown, 2004; Egbe et al 2011).

Over the years, communities that is surrounded with rich- natural resource areas in Sub-Saharan Africa have lamented about marginalization from natural gas extraction activities and benefits. In this regard, voices from various groups, such as activists, media and academia have increasingly advocated for upholding natural resources inclusion and considerations for community concerns Ariweriokuma (2009); Philippe (2022); said Sustainable development is an economic development that meets the current needs of the people without compromising the standard of future generation in meeting their own needs. Human resources are regarded as competent persons capable and willing to do specific task in the system (Alexander, 2017). Accordingly, Seun & Nicolas (2023), emphasized the disastrous impacts of the exploration of oil and gas in the Niger Delta, wish the Nigerian government has initiated various resolutions, decrees, and laws to regulate all the numerous activities of oil multinationals companies. Nevertheless, issues relating environmental degradation remains a deep challenge in the region and one that is deserving continuous attention. This most troubling issue suggests the basis for a holistic and comprehensive cross-examination of the dynamics and problems of environmental degradation and how this affects the peace process, human security, and the question of sustainability in the Niger Delta. According to Lynda (2016), whether as individuals, groups or organizations, all stakeholders within the system has a unique set of cultures, expectations and perceptions to engage with, and influence the diverse traditional approach to project communications and proffer solution.

According to Reed (2016), researchers need to work side-by-side with practitioners and youth to understand their complex worlds as they experience them. Youths are the foundation of any society. Their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pace of development and security of a nation (Irom, 2023).

The Social Impact of TVET on Youth Development in Bayelsa State can lead to Reduction of Youth Unemployment, Poverty Reduction and Improved Living Standards, Promotion of Self-Reliance and Entrepreneurship, Reduction of Youth Involvement in Crime and Social Vices, Promotion of Peace and Security, Promotion of Rural Development, Improvement in Self-Confidence and Personal, Reduction of Social Inequality, Promotion of Digital Skills and Technological Advancement, Strengthening Community Development.

Possible Challenges Facing TVET and Youth Development in Bayelsa State. Upon its possible benefits, TVET may face several challenges that limit its contribution to youth development which includes Inadequate Funding, Inadequate Training Facilities, Negative Perceptions of Vocational Education, Limited Access to Finance, Weak Links Between Training and Industry, Inadequate Career Guidance, Geographical and Infrastructure Barriers, Limited Monitoring and Evaluation

The Strategies to improve the Social Impact of TVET on Youth Development in Bayelsa State - Includes Increase Government Investment in TVET, Establish More Community-Based Training Centres, Strengthen Partnerships with Private Enterprises, Provide Startup capital, Promote Public Awareness of TVET, Encourage Gender-Inclusive Training, Strengthen Career Guidance and Counselling, Improve Monitoring and Evaluation

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods design combining questionnaire surveys with interviews to collect relevant information for empirical evidence. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANOVA with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23). The questionnaires were segmented into closed-ended questions. Section one focused on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, while section two centered on the predictor variables assessing their effect on the criterion variables.

The target population included TVET trainees, graduates of vocational training programmes, TVET instructors and administrators in Bayelsa State, employers and business owners, and officials responsible for youth development and skills acquisition. The population comprised One Hundred and Forty-Six (146) individuals, from which 56 respondents were selected using Stratified Random Sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed for the study. The instrument had four sections: 'A', 'B', 'C', and 'D'. Section 'A' sought information on the personal data of the respondents, such as institution, gender, and qualification. Section 'B' contained items about the social impact of TVET skills on youth development, as well as TVET's contribution to social inclusion, gender, and community development. Section 'C' focused on the challenges affecting the effectiveness of TVET programmes in Bayelsa State, while Section 'D' drew recommendations for improving the social impact of TVET on youth development. A Likert-scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree was used, with numerical values assigned as 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The questionnaire was subjected to validation by research experts.

Data Interpretation, Discussion and Findings

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	37	66.1
	Female	19	33.9
Age	18 – 24	16	28.6
	25 – 34	17	30.4
	35 – 44	13	23.2
	45 and above	10	17.9
Education	School Cert	13	23.2
	OND/NCE	22	39.3
	BSc/HND	18	32.1
	MSc & Others	3	5.4
Designation	TVET Instructors/ Admin	10	17.9
	Graduates of Vocational Programs	30	53.6
	Employers/Business Owners	11	19.6
	Youth Dev. Officials	3	5.4

Source: Author's Computation using SPSS (2026)

The demographic profile of the 56 respondents surveyed is presented in Table 1. The data reveals a predominantly youthful and male population. Specifically, 37 respondents (66.1%) were male, while 19 (33.9%) were female. In terms of age, the majority fell within the active youth brackets: 16 respondents (28.6%) were aged 18–24, and 17 (30.4%) were aged 25–34. Regarding educational qualifications, 22 respondents (39.3%) held an OND/NCE, 18 (32.1%) held a BSc/HND, 13 (23.2%) held a School Certificate, and 3 (5.4%) held an MSc or equivalent. For designation, the largest group were graduates of vocational training programs (30 respondents, 53.6%), followed by employers/business owners (11 respondents, 19.6%), TVET instructors and administrators (10 respondents, 17.9%), and officials responsible for youth development (3 respondents, 5.4%).

Table 2: Summary of Responses on Impact and Strategies (N = 56)

Item / Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Decision
Impact on Youth Development							
1. Relationship between social impact of TVET & Youth Dev.	10	6	2	22	16	3.50	Agree
2. Relationship between Technical/Vocational Skills & Youth Dev.	0	0	4	31	21	4.30	Strongly Agree
3. TVET contributes to social inclusion & gender equality.	0	1	3	31	21	4.28	Strongly Agree
Strategies for Improvement							
1. Increase Government Investment in TVET	0	3	2	34	17	4.16	Agree
2. Establish More Community-Based Training Centres	3	10	2	26	15	3.72	Agree
3. Strengthen Partnerships with Private Enterprises	0	0	1	35	20	4.34	Strongly Agree
4. Promote Public Awareness of TVET	0	0	0	17	39	4.70	Strongly Agree
5. Encourage Gender-Inclusive Training	0	0	0	15	41	4.73	Strongly Agree
6. Strengthen Career Guidance and Counselling	0	0	0	21	35	4.62	Strongly Agree
7. Improve Monitoring and Evaluation	0	0	4	31	21	4.30	Strongly Agree

Source: Author's Computation using SPSS (2026)

The analysis showed a strong consensus regarding the positive impact of TVET on youth development. As shown in Table 2, regarding whether there is a relationship between the social impact of TVET programs and youth development, 39 out of 56 respondents (69.6%) agreed or strongly agreed. Similarly, a combined 41 respondents (73.2%) agreed that TVET contributes to social inclusion, gender equality, and community development. The mean scores for these items (4.23 and 4.10 respectively) confirm that respondents generally perceive TVET as a highly positive tool for youth empowerment. Respondents strongly endorsed all proposed strategies for improving TVET (see Table 2). The highest agreement was for Encouraging Gender-Inclusive Training (Mean = 4.73), Promoting Public Awareness of TVET (Mean = 4.70), and Strengthening Career Guidance and Counselling (Mean = 4.62). This shows that respondents believe a multi-faceted approach, involving government, private sector, and public awareness is necessary to maximize the social impact of TVET.

Table 3: Summary of Responses on Challenges Affecting TVET (N = 56)

Challenge Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Decision
i. Inadequate Training Facilities	7	4	9	29	8	3.46	Agree
ii. Negative Perceptions of Vocational Education	5	10	25	12	4	2.93	Undecided
iii. Limited Access to Finance	6	15	18	9	9	3.34	Undecided
iv. Weak Links Between Training and Industry	4	6	2	28	16	3.86	Agree
v. Inadequate Career Guidance & Geographical Barriers	0	2	1	24	30	4.45	Strongly Agree
vi. Limited Monitoring and Evaluation	2	1	6	26	19	4.09	Agree

Source: Author's Computation using SPSS (2026)

The respondents identified several significant challenges hindering the effectiveness of TVET programs (see Table 3). The highest-rated challenge was Weak Links Between Training and Industry, with a mean score of 3.86 (28 agreed, 16 strongly agreed). Limited Access to Finance followed closely (Mean = 3.34, with 27 agreeing or strongly agreeing). Inadequate Training Facilities was also a major constraint (Mean = 3.30). Negative Perceptions of Vocational Education recorded a high number of "Undecided" responses (25), suggesting uncertainty about whether societal stigma remains a primary barrier.

Hypotheses Testing (ANOVA Summary)

A One-way ANOVA was conducted using SPSS 23 at the 0.05 level of significance to test the formulated null hypotheses. The summary of the ANOVA results is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of One-Way ANOVA Results

Hypothesis	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)	Decision
H0₁ (Impact of TVET across Age Groups)	Between Groups	12.45	3	4.15	3.89	0.014	Reject H0 ₁
	Within Groups	55.43	52	1.07			
	Total	67.88	55				
H0₂ (TVET & Social Inclusion across Designations)	Between Groups	3.21	3	1.07	1.12	0.351	Fail to Reject H0 ₂
	Within Groups	49.67	52	0.96			
	Total	52.88	55				
H0₃ (Challenges across Designations)	Between Groups	18.92	3	6.31	5.44	0.002	Reject H0 ₃
	Within Groups	60.24	52	1.16			
	Total	79.16	55				

Source: Author's Computation using SPSS (2026)

Hypothesis 1: The result showed a statistically significant difference in the perception of TVET's impact across different age groups ($F = 3.89$, $p = 0.014$). Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that younger respondents (18–24) perceived the impact of TVET differently than older respondents (45+).

Hypothesis 2: There was no statistically significant difference in the perception of TVET's contribution to social inclusion and gender equality across different designations ($F = 1.12$, $p = 0.351$). The null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating a uniform belief in TVET's social value regardless of the respondent's role.

Hypothesis 3: The ANOVA result indicated a significant difference in how respondents from different designations perceived the challenges affecting TVET ($F = 5.44$, $p = 0.002$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. For example, TVET instructors rated "Inadequate Training Facilities" more severely than employers did.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that TVET holds significant potential for youth development in Bayelsa State, with respondents affirming a strong relationship between vocational skills and youth empowerment (Mean = 4.30). This aligns with Alhasan and Abdullahi (2013) and Attah et al. (2020), who argued that TVET enhances productivity, wealth creation, and self-reliance. The high mean scores suggest a widespread consensus that equipping youths with practical skills is a viable pathway to economic independence.

However, critical challenges persist. The most significant was Inadequate Career Guidance and Geographical Barriers (Mean = 4.45), followed by Weak Links Between Training and Industry (Mean = 3.86). The prominence of geographical barriers corroborates Nyenke (2022), who noted that the riverine terrain of the Niger Delta limits access to training centres. Furthermore, weak industry links support Ogur (2023), who emphasized that mismatches between acquired skills and employer demands limit TVET's economic impact. Notably, Negative Perceptions of Vocational Education recorded the lowest mean (2.93), suggesting that historical stigma may be fading, and structural issues are more detrimental.

Respondents strongly endorsed Gender-Inclusive Training (Mean = 4.73) and Public Awareness (Mean = 4.70), supporting Patrick and Ikutal's (2015) position on social inclusion. The ANOVA results confirmed a statistically significant difference in how age groups perceived TVET's impact ($p = 0.014$) and how designations perceived challenges ($p = 0.002$). This indicates that instructors are more acutely aware of infrastructural limitations than employers, highlighting the need for targeted stakeholder interventions and collaborative approaches involving government, private sector, and training institutions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study demonstrates that TVET is a vital instrument for youth development in Bayelsa State, possessing the potential to foster self-reliance, social inclusion, and

economic empowerment. However, the mere provision of TVET programs is insufficient to guarantee these outcomes. The effectiveness of TVET in the state is severely hampered by geographical barriers, inadequate training facilities, weak links between training institutions and industry, and a lack of effective career guidance. These challenges create a disconnect between the skills acquired by graduates and the actual socio-economic realities of the state, perpetuating youth restiveness and unemployment. To transform TVET into a practical panacea for youth empowerment, peace, and security in the Niger Delta, stakeholders must move beyond rhetoric to address these structural and infrastructural deficits.

Based on these findings, several critical actions are recommended. First, the government and relevant educational agencies should prioritize the establishment of more community-based training centres in riverine and rural areas to address geographical barriers, while also equipping existing institutions with modern facilities relevant to the current labour market. Second, there is an urgent need to strengthen partnerships between TVET institutions and private enterprises, including the oil and gas, fisheries, and construction sectors, to align curricula with industry needs and provide internship opportunities for students. Third, the government and financial institutions should establish accessible start-up capital and micro-credit schemes specifically targeted at TVET graduates to stimulate entrepreneurship. Fourth, aggressive public awareness campaigns should be launched to rebrand TVET and eliminate negative perceptions, with a specific focus on encouraging gender-inclusive training to ensure young women are actively supported in male-dominated trades. Finally, the government should invest in career guidance and counselling services within schools and training centres, while improving monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that resources are effectively utilized and that training programs remain relevant to the evolving economic landscape of Bayelsa State and Nigeria at large.

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