



Examining public perception on Technical and Vocational Education and Training enrolment in Ghana

Abubakar-Zagoon Adams, Emmanuel Intsiful, Haruna Zagoon-Sayeed & Ato Essuman

To cite this article: Abubakar-Zagoon Adams, Emmanuel Intsiful, Haruna Zagoon-Sayeed & Ato Essuman (2023): Examining public perception on Technical and Vocational Education and Training enrolment in Ghana, International Journal of Training Research, DOI: [10.1080/14480220.2023.2222943](https://doi.org/10.1080/14480220.2023.2222943)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14480220.2023.2222943>



Published online: 19 Jun 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 40




View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Examining public perception on Technical and Vocational Education and Training enrolment in Ghana

Abubakar-Zagoon Adams^a, Emmanuel Intsiful ^b, Haruna Zagoon-Sayed^c and Ato Essuman^d

^aBaraka Policy Institute (BPI), Accra, Ghana; ^bAli Mazuri Centre for Higher Education Studies, University of Johannesburg, Auckland Park, South Africa; ^cDepartment for the Study of Religions and Department of Educational Studies, University of Ghana and Methodist University, Legon, Ghana; ^dFaculty of Education and Entrepreneurship, Methodist University Ghana, Accra, Ghana

ABSTRACT

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) enrollment in Ghana has been impeded by various challenges. One of the significant obstacles throughout the years has been public perception. As a result, many people prefer grammar-based schools over TVET. This study aims to investigate the operations of TVET in the Ayawaso-West Municipality of the Greater Accra Region in Ghana to determine the level of public perception and its impact on enrollment. The study employs the impression formation theory as a framework. An exploratory research design and a qualitative research approach were used to conduct the study. Thirty-six participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The findings revealed that the negative perception affecting the progress of the TVET subsector included lower societal recognition, lower job prestige and public ignorance of TVET. The study recommends continuous advocacy for TVET to correct public perception.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 23 January 2023
Accepted 5 June 2023

KEYWORDS

Public perception;
socioeconomic; lower
enrollment; skill-related jobs;
TVET

Introduction

It is impossible to understate how important technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has been to the development of local, regional and global economies. TVET basically serves the purpose of providing individuals with the technical and professional skills necessary for the socioeconomic and industrial development of the nation (Ansah & Kissi, 2013). Bhurtel (2015) opines that investment in TVET has resulted in the socioeconomic growth of many countries: it holds the key to technological advancement, rapid industrialization, economic development (employment or self-employment) and poverty alleviation. In Africa, TVET has been the key to skill development as it enables individuals to locate skill-related jobs or start their own businesses. The role of TVET in the labor market is to create jobs and also help the youth to become job creators rather than job seekers (Afeti, 2018). According to Cedefop (2011), TVET helps minimize unemployment and can protect people from becoming unemployed. The evidence points to positive impacts on efficiency, creativity, and growth in jobs and on corporate culture as regards

CONTACT Emmanuel Intsiful  eintsiful@uj.ac.za  Ali Mazuri Centre for Higher Education Studies, University of Johannesburg, Auckland Park, South Africa

the benefits of enterprises. In vulnerable areas, TVET may also play a pivotal role in developing the economy and reducing the lack of skills between employees and businesses.

The positive role of TVET in promoting development was identified long ago in Ghana, and has been backed by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, which states that technical and vocational education shall be made universally accessible and progressively free (The Constitution of Ghana, 1992, Act. 25). According to Dasmani (2011), the goal of implementing TVET in Ghana was to equip Ghanaian youth with technical and vocational skills so that they can become proficient craftspeople and valuable members of society. Despite the foregoing importance of TVET, numerous difficulties related to TVET have been noted on both the local and international levels. For instance, the World Bank (2012) lists some difficulties facing TVET in numerous nations, including the involvement of TVET non-professionals in TVET policy decisions, the non-professionalization of the teaching profession, inadequate funding and low Information Communication Technology compliance in the curricula. Similar issues have been reported in Ghanaian studies (e.g. Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011; Yangben & Seniwoliba, 2014), including a lack of government commitment, inadequate funding, a dearth of technical institutions, a skills gap and mismatch, low enrollment, a lack of facilities and materials, insufficient technical teachers or facilitators, difficulty in career advancement, and for the academically weak, underprivileged in society and school dropout. Due to TVET systems' shortcomings in African societies, general academic education is seen as taking precedence over TVET. This is due to the fact that graduates of grammar schools are hired for white-colored jobs, whereas TVET graduates are hired for blue-colored, less desirable jobs. Because TVET offers few opportunities for academic advancement and lacks prestige on the continent, many parents and guardians discourage and prevent their wards from enrolling in TVET programs (Maiga, 2013). This is a serious consequence of TVET's stigma in Ghana and other African nations. Each of these elements has an impact on how TVET develops and advances, making research into them worthwhile. Over the years, the Ghana government has made it an agenda to equip TVET institutions across the country to be more attractive and conducive environments for youth to study in by providing infrastructure, funding, equipment, policy direction and training of teachers (Council for Technical and Vocational Education [COTVET], 2020), yet the subsector is always faced with lower enrollment as many parents want their wards, and even students prefer to attend grammar-based institutions than TVET. In the education strategic plan 2018–2030 of Ghana Ministry of Education (2018), it is indicated that the TVET subsector is constrained by low public perceptions and that many of the students placed under TVET subsector end up not attending. The document reported that in 2013 only 2.1% students selected TVET. Even though the education strategic plan has hinted on the on low public perception but little or no further study has been conducted to critically explore to ascertain whether not indeed public perception play a key role in the TVET enrollment in Ghana. This study sought to find out the role of public perception in TVET enrollment in Ghana.

Literature review

TVET within the Ghanaian education system

The operation of TVET has been part of the Ghanaian educational system since the colonial era. In the early 1830s, the Basel Mission was not only interested in religious

activities but also wanted to promote human development and started training youth in skills development in the area of carpentry, masonry, bricklaying, bookbinding, blacksmithing, pottery and basketry (Asare-Danso, 2014). According to the report, agricultural and technical training colleges were founded in the 1920s at Asuansi, Akuapim Akropong and Abokobi by Governor Gordon Guggisberg and the Basel Mission. Governor Rodger established Accra Government Technical School in 1909 before Guggisberg took office because he recognized the need for technical education. The school was later moved to Takoradi and is now known as Government Secondary Technical School (Amoah, 2003 as cited in Essel et al., 2014).

According to Ansah and Kissi (2013), the Ghanaian government recognizes the role of TVET in industrialization and thus emphasizes TVET in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan. The Ghana Vision 2020's basic identification and ideology are to adjust TVET with national dreams and ambitions, as well as local and global needs. According to Darvas and Palmer (2014), in 2007 there were education reforms that made TVET one of the priorities in Ghana. The purpose of the reforms aimed at making TVET a priority for students to gain hands-on skills for the job market through the support of public and private sector agencies. It was pointed out that education bill was introduced, which opened up new structures and institutional roles and responsibilities in order to improve education. The Policy was initiated to attract both small-scale and large-scale industries participate in TVET. TVET was made part of education system, which cut across from primary to tertiary both in public and private institutions. TVET subsector has been backed by law in their operation in Ghana; the National Vocational Training Institute Act of 1970, the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations Act, 1994 (Act 492), the Children's Act, 1998, the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act 718), and the Polytechnic Act, 2007 (Act 745) (Ansah & Kissi, 2013).

In 2006, the Ghanaian Parliament passed the TVET Policy Act (Act 718) authorizing the establishment of the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training with the mandate of developing national policies on skill development at the pre-tertiary and tertiary levels of education in order to cover formal and informal segments of the economy; it will comprise coordinating, harmonizing and supervision for both private and public TVET activities; ensure quality and equity in accessing TVET; and promote cooperation with international agencies and development partners (Pongo & Obinnim, 2015). 'The new radical reform introduces Competent Base Training as a mode of TVET delivery in Ghana', Anane (2013) noted.

As part of the mandate, the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training designed a strategic plan for TVET transformation 2018–2022. This strategic plan sought to advance equitable access for all in TVET and advance quality in learning and teaching at all levels (COTVET, 2020).

The document emphasizes TVET with the strategic goal of strengthening competency-based skills development in TVET to reflect the needs of the economy of Ghana. The strategic plan has identified access as a key component of the TVET reform to address the limited accessibility challenges. The document sought to address poor coordination, and therefore all TVET activities that fall under 15 ministries would be considered under the Ministry of Education in the new TVET policy of the National TVET Qualifications Framework under the supervision of COTVET. Its emphasis is on the restructuring of the TVET curriculum and create avenue to train more teachers (Ghana Ministry of Education,

2018). In order for one body to coordinate and strengthen the operation of TVET in Ghana, an act of the parliament (ACT 1023, Education Regulatory Bodies Act) has been enacted and therefore there is the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training with mandate of 'to regulate, promote and administer technical and vocational education and training transformation and innovation for sustainable development' (Ministry of Education, 2021) This means that the operation of TVET in Ghana will now be under one body.

Public perception of TVET

Over the years debate around TVET has been about what caliber of people or students needs to be in such a subsector. Studies have revealed that the TVET subsector is been dominated by people who are academically weak, underprivileged in society and school dropouts (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011; Yangben & Seniwoliba, 2014). Agyarkoh (2013 as cited in Essel et al., 2014) said that a comparative analysis of the three different curricula reveals that while general academic education developed students' cognitive and affective domains, technical and vocational systems developed students' cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills. Only artisans, foremen and supervisor positions were available in the industry for technical and vocational graduates, who were always subordinate to their coworkers who had general academic training and went on to pursue diploma and degree programs at universities. The terms of employment in the industry were skewed to favor senior staff with university degrees in terms of compensation, advancement, incentives and other areas. The three major formal education systems (technical, vocational and general education) that predominate in African countries over time are clearly paralleled in these comparisons, as are the social and academic classifications that they have produced.

However, the debate surrounding TVET and grammar-based schools has given different views. It has been argued that to get quality education, especially at the highest level, four key factors play a role in influencing individual demand. These factors are individual, economic, sociocultural and institutional factors (Noguera et al., 2013). According to Streeck (2012), general education is meant for improving abilities (for instance, literacy and numeracy), which are important and helpful in all occupations; however, TVET is meant for shaping of skills for specific agreed jobs, a focused job for one particular work. In any case, there has been a lot of contention on general and particular skills. TVET has the potential to increase people's interest in careers in the economy (Sumberg et al., 2021). TVET could still help students develop their occupational skills and broaden their interests (Aring, 2015).

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] (2018), possibly the best formal TVET programs may be more impactful than general (or academic) education in incorporating disadvantaged people (such as women and youth) into the labor economy and gaining their earnings. Evidence from Turkey suggests that TVET has a much stronger positive impact on women's labor market participation rates and employment probabilities, but not on their wage levels (Nilsson, 2019). Women's employment, even at low wages, can improve women's social standing in their households and communities, as well as reduce women's financial dependence on their male partners, making them less vulnerable to domestic violence (World Bank, 2012). Until the

past few decades, general education was thought to be a much more lucrative path because it teaches obtainable skills that can be applied along a variety of occupations and provides more access to decent, well-paying jobs. However, the recent increase in global youth unemployment has been traced back to 'skills mismatches' caused by an overly conceptual system of education that fails to provide the specific technical and vocational skills increasingly demanded by employers (Biavaschi et al., 2013; UNESCO/UNEVOC, 2013). As a result, many countries have high youth unemployment while also experiencing skills gap in key sectors of the economy due to a lack of strong focus on TVET (ILO, 2014).

One of the most significant challenges in many Asian nations is a lack of industry-ready skilled workers and beyond that those who get market are paid less (Gaba & Mishra, 2016; Song & Tang, 2016). It is also emphasized that countries with embedded dual apprenticeship systems, in which school-based (vocational) education is integrated with organized on-the-job training, have the fastest schooling transition rates between secondary TVE graduates (Gyimah, 2020). As a result, TVET graduates have a better chance at getting job than general education graduates (Hanushek et al., 2017). Secondary TVET graduates appear to earn as much as or more than secondary general education graduates over the course of their careers (OECD, 2018). According to evidence from the United States, TVET graduates work longer hours, get better jobs and generally earn more than their general education counterparts (Leyaro & Joseph, 2019). The wage disparity that once existed between two educational tracks in European countries has already shuttered as a result of increased demand for TVET skills (Russo et al., 2013). According to researchers, compared to job opportunities of TVET graduates versus general education graduates just at upper secondary school level in the European Union, at the upper secondary and tertiary levels in the United States, the United Kingdom and France, and between skilled vocational versus university graduates in Australia, TVET helps in rapid school-to-work transformations than general education (Cedefop, 2013).

Nevertheless, according to Ayonmike et al. (2015), the case of using TVET to produce jobs and wealth has primarily been a misconception as TVET graduates under certain cases lack marketable and occupational skills, making them less recognized in the society. As per the study, some graduates with marketable and occupational skills are still unemployed, which is viewed as a threat to the supposed job employment creation and income generation. According to Kingombe (2012), running formal TVET comes with huge cost but its impacts on economy are great just that it is rare in developing countries. However, in developing countries, there is evidence that suggests that TVET in the informal sector graduate performs better on gaining employment chain compared to formal TVET or general education graduate, making it the largest sector of work in the development countries (Biavaschi et al., 2013). The impact of TVET in relation to responding to situation for intervention is quicker than general education. For instance, regarding the ongoing pandemic (COVID-19), Majumder & Araiztegui (2020) in their study found that TVET institutions took center stage in Spain in producing protective gears and other provisions like sanitizers and masks. Other equipment was repaired and maintained for use by the health facilities. A study conducted in Ethiopia on enterprises performances revealed that the manufacturing and construction sector has a rapid development rate against any of the sectors and suggested that country development is of much concern with industrialization (Tarfasa et al., 2016).

This indicates that TVET comes with immense opportunities, with ultimate goal of creating jobs for us to be self-employed or employed. The demand to work is very high, and it is a sector that blends some aspects into the general education such as numeracy, English language and science when learning TVET.

Research gap

There have been extensive studies done in the TVET subsector with regard to the economic potentials and some challenges affecting the subsector. These challenges have been extensively understudied such as infrastructure, funding, equipment, training of teachers and such challenges are progressively been addressed by the Government of Ghana (COTVET, 2020). Public perception has also been cited as one of the challenges affecting the subsector by some studies in Ghana for instance (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011; Yangben & Seniwoliba, 2014; Ghana Ministry of Education, 2018). But little studies or no further studies have been conducted on public perception to explore the critical role that it plays in enrolment in the Ghanaian TVET subsector. It is therefore the reason why this study sought to examine public perception on TVET enrolment in Ghana.

Theoretical framework

This study adopted the impression formation theory, which was propounded by Solomon Eliot Asch in 1907. A subconscious and spontaneous process of establishing opinions on new people or the environment is referred to as 'making an impression'. Such beliefs are frequently based on little-known facts about the subject, yet they shape how people interact with others or their surroundings (Prinzhorn, 2013).

It has been argued that people receive, arrange and eventually integrate information in order to build cohesive and coherent situational perceptions of others. Internalized expectations for specific events shape what information people consider significant and worthy of their attention. Furthermore, these expectations influence how people interpret this information. In face-to-face interaction, social signals such as others' physical appearance and verbal and nonverbal behavior, as well as the social situation in which the exchange occurs, mix with information in the perceivers' memories to influence how they develop initial impressions of others and themselves. These early impressions form the foundation for subsequent attributions (Choo et al., 2013).

This theory underlies some discussion around the TVET subsector; many people have little or no proper information about TVET. Because the public lacks information about the subsector, there has been a certain attitude toward the students in the TVET subsector.

Every individual's life is influenced by impressions in decision-making. Many parents consider the career pattern and how such an education path is viewed by society when making educational decisions. Using this theory (impressions), consider what students desire to achieve or the type of career parents want their children to have after graduation. A component of this theory is how internal expectations for specific events shape what information people consider significant and worthy of their attention. Furthermore, these expectations influence how people interpret this information. People frequently form rapid perceptions of others based on limited information. In this regard, these theories fit into this

study because the public has or does not have enough information about TVET and its importance for national development, and thus using theories provides a better understanding of the public's perception of TVET.

The theory provides the component of how people in the society belief and act with no or little knowledge on issues or situation. In the context of public perception on TVET, it is based on what people know whether it is accurate or not. This theory fits into this context in the sense that it gives clarity as to how people gathered information and used. Therefore to ascertain perception of the public use, the impression formation theory was perfect fit.

Methodology

Research approach

Gathering, analyzing and interpreting of data from the field are crucial to the study as they provide the bases of addressing the problem of the study. This study sought to examine public perception technical and vocational education training enrolment in Ghana. In this context, the study adopted qualitative research method to explore the phenomenon. Qualitative research method, according to Dick, 2015, gives an account on human thoughts, feelings and interpretation, which are in line with what individuals have seen and experienced and to give meaning to such phenomenon and therefore qualitative method answers the question 'why'. This does not deal with hypothesis, and therefore it base is inductive reasoning. On the path of qualitative method, phenomenology approach was used. This approach seeks to explain or describe individual's or group's live experienced and feelings with phenomenon based on reality (subjective views). This explored the views of respondents on perception with regard to TVET.

Source of data

The two data used in gathering data are primary and secondary data. The primary data were the data gathered from the field (respondents) interview guide where opened-end questions were used, and this was done in a face-to-face manner. The secondary data were based on the document surrounding the study. These documents were Ghana Education Strategy (2018), TVET Stigmatization in Developing Countries: Reality or Fallacy? Essel et al. (2014), Image and Students 'loyalty Towards Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Sail et al., 2015), general education, vocational education, and labor market outcomes over the lifecycle (Hanushek et al., 2017) and employment mobility and returns to technical and vocational training (Leyaro & Joseph, 2019).

Unit of inquiry

The study sought to explore the students, school staff and parent's knowledge of perception in the TVET subsector enrolment. This unit inquiry was carefully selected due to their involvement in the cycle of TVET subsector.

Sample size determination

Participants were selected based on life experience, feeling and reality on tag perception about TVET about them. Thirty-six participants in total, including both males and females, were chosen for this study. This comprises 2 school officers, 12) male and female students each, and 5 male and female parents each. The parents were selected by students who participated in the study but only 10 showed interested to participate. They were the individuals who, in the researcher's opinion, satisfied the study's inclusion requirements. The participant students were selected from the Plumbing, Electrical, Catering, and Dress Making departments of training, as well as students from all levels (Form 1 to Form 3), as well as gender, and were included in the criteria. The school's principal and the department head of teachers were also selected. In order to determine their perspective on perception, the study looked at the parents of first-year and third-year students. The third-year students' parents gave this as their justification: since their children had been in the school for 3 years, they had heard a lot from the public or society and could therefore express their opinions from the time they enrolled them till the present. Parents of new students were asked for their opinions on TVET and were encouraged to send their children there. This provided a more complete picture of the experiences shared by parents and students, or staff in TVET institutions, with the Ayawaso West Municipality. TVET students and their parents were matched. The study focused on the Opportunity Industrialization Centre. The study selected the Opportunity Industrialization Centre for these reasons: it is cited in one elite society in Greater Accra Region, Ayawaso West Municipal Assembly. Out of several schools in the municipality, it is the only TVET and government second cycle school according to the Ministry of Finance (2019) report, and most of the students are not residents.

Sampling technique

Sampling technique is the process used in selecting the sample size (respondent) to participate in the study. Due to the nature of the study being qualitative, the study adopted non-probability sample. In a non-probability sample, some units in the population are more likely to be chosen than others, according to Creswell (2014). Purposive sampling, a well-known non-probability sampling technique, was used in this study. They adopted purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, according to Rahi (2017), is the procedure where the researcher uses his or her judgment to choose a group of people who are acquainted with the issue at hand. The researcher had the chance to communicate directly with the major players in the TVET educational sector thanks to the use of purposeful sampling. By evaluating only data from a subgroup rather than all potential cases or elements, Saunders and Shlomo (2021) recommend using sampling techniques to reduce the amount of data that must be collected.

Data analysis

With the aid of an interview guide, face-to-face key informant interviews were conducted with the chosen personnel and the parents of some focused group discussion participants. Semi-structured, open-ended questions were included in the interview guide.

Based on the goals of the research, the guide was created. The public perception of TVET was covered in the personnel questions, along with the factors that contributed to that perception. Parents' knowledge of TVET and the public's perception of TVET were both topics covered in the study. While the interviews with the teacher and head teacher were conducted in English, those with the parents were primarily conducted in Twi, a Ghanaian language (one of the Ghanaian languages). The school officials and the parents were both interviewed for between 40 and 60 min. With the experts' and parents' permission, all interviews were audio recorded. Interviews were conducted in English while being verbatim transcribed. So, 2 experts and 10 parents made up the 12 Key Informant Interviews that were conducted. Additionally, three focus group discussions were held. Students from all class levels and from the fields of fashion design, electrical, catering, plumbing and auto mechanics made up each group. There were eight participants in each group. The groups were mixed, all-female, and all-male (males and females). The focused group discussion focused on gathering data regarding public perceptions of TVET education and students, as well as student knowledge. The choice to enrol in TVET was discussed during the focus group discussion. The length of each group discussion varied from 60 to 90 min. The interviews were conducted in English.

For this study, the data were manually analyzed, and a thematic analysis was used. Creswell (2014) asserts that the thematic analysis accurately captures the participants' experiences, meanings and realities. Thematic analysis was an appropriate method of analysis because it supported qualitative data analyses that were ideal for informing policy development. Gaining unexpected insight into the situation of the public's perception of TVET was made possible by thematic analysis. The participants' sub-themes and the data collected revealed three main themes. The difficulties affecting the promotion of TVET were thoroughly understood. It made it possible to interpret the data using the knowledge and experience of the study participants, which is consistent with the inductive paradigm approach that the study emphasized. The principles for theme development proposed by Vaismoradi et al. (2016) were applied in this study. The interviews were transcribed, read, coded and highlighted in order to reveal the meanings behind the accounts. It was also built, with the theme of the analysis established, and it was classified, compared, labeled, translated, defined and described. The transcription reveals themes that were not predetermined.

Ethical consideration

Social researchers frequently strive to comprehend social processes by acquiring data from research participants. The collection of data from participants in social research must be done in the most compassionate and equitable way feasible. This means that researchers must address ethical considerations when studying subjects and handling data collected. The term ethics, according to Frankel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012), refers to the problems of right and wrong. According to Bryman (2012), talks regarding research ethics put us into a realm where the role of values in the research process becomes a matter of concern and revolves around issues. Drawing on Bryman guide to ethical consideration, the following procedures were followed. Protecting participants from harm: responders must feel safe and be in the correct state of mind to answer the questions. Informed consent: the researcher sought the informed consent of the respondents before

conducting the research. Such informed consent gave the participants the opportunity to decide whether or not to participate. Right to privacy: participants were first and foremost notified of their right to privacy. The right to privacy means that a participant has the freedom to choose when and where he or she will engage in a study. Right to freedom of choice and expression: it was necessary to ensure that the researcher did not interfere with the respondents' choices and ideas. As a result, the researcher protected the participants' right to free choice and expression. Confidentiality: confidentiality is a critical ethical problem to consider. Assuring participants about the safety of their comments is part of maintaining confidentiality. Anonymity: another ethical aspect that was considered was the safeguarding of the participants' anonymity. The right to anonymity was granted in order to avoid disclosing the identities of the participants, which could have had a negative impact on them.

Findings

Two major themes that came out of the thematic analysis were the focus of the analysis: (i) public ignorance of TVET and (ii) low societal recognition/job prestige.

Public ignorance of TVET

Significantly, all the participants provided enough information of their knowledge about TVET and its important to economy growth. But the respondents raised one critical concern, that is, having a negative impact on the TVET subsector and level of public ignorance. The concept of TVET is not well understood, and many are basing their knowledge of TVET education on available misconception information in the society. This is because a lot are holding on to the pre-colonial period when those who could not read or write were taken through hands-on skills to enable them to feed themselves and those who can read and write are rather taken to grammar-based school. The practices of TVET and people in the hand-on skills are known to people who are illiterate and operate mainly on the roadside as one of the school teachers has this to say:

It is basically a lack of knowledge from the general public on TVET education. Many people believe that TVET education is only for failures (those who could not passed well in the examination at basic level) in the society. They (the majority of Ghanaians) believe that sending your child to a TVET institution and is nothing but waste of time without hope of career advancement after the second cycle level as compare to grammar-based school in Ghana but the subsector is to build upon the skills or unearth the hand-on skills of individually that does not mean it is an open get for all. (Teacher)

The school teacher's response is in line with parent's assertion when interviewed. The parent considered that, despite TVET is meant to shape the skills of the youth, the institutions do not place a premium on the academic performance and intelligent on the students before admitted. Even though the subsector must be led by passion of individuals but must be guided by the standard practices of gaining admission any second cycle school.

I recommended TVET subsector to friends for their wards and their responses were that, their wards cannot be in the same school with school dropout or people who had no school. They

being in such institution will be mismatch and the children cannot be inspired to the greatest height in life of the career. (Parent)

Many interviewees pointed out that public believe that those students from the TVET subsector are the ground for immoral behavior in the society. They believe that TVET institutions by its nature promote immorality and do not have any proper structure in shaping or discipline youth. The following excerpt explains the mindset of the public on TVET subsector and the why some section of the public do not prefer:

I personally have been asked in public gathering that whether training of student in any aspect of the TVET require the student to possess certain behaviour to before he or she is taught. People believe that TVET students are radicals and learnt this in the school but I tell people that students comes to school with certain behaviour that some parent or the society are aware and only come to exhibit. Some students learnt these bad behaviour claimed by many in the society from friends not necessary from a colleague in the TVET subsector but also from grammar-based school. We are shape their attitude so there is rules and regulation just like any school. (TVET principal)

The principal view underlines some key disclaim from the public about TVET. The subsector operation is like the grammar-based schools that uphold discipline and before TVET does not train student to become radical. Peer pressure plays a role in youth behavior. Students believe that at their age they should be known with certain attitude. Again, the behavior put by students is brought from the various homes and when such behavior is known in the way they deal with it. In the focused group discussion with the students, it was revealed to be similar to what the principal said. Students voiced out that immediately once the people get to know that you are a student from the TVET, they begin to ask and behave very weird toward you. This is what a student had to say:

Hmmm, people think TVET subsector that I am attending, I have learnt how to use illicit drugs or I am into smoking and thinking of alcohol. I do tell we are not what they think. It is very dishearten but this situation people have tag us with. (Student)

Participants affirmed that many believe that students of TVET are quick to fight anybody who do not understand them and can destroy anything they lay their hands on. This is quickly challenging as even it can affect your chance of getting a part time work while in school. Below is the expression of the other student in focus group discussion.

Sometime when you are with friends and there is any misunderstand, you will hear certain comment like 'we know you people do not come fight'. Due the nature of your programme you people are also with weapons or instrument that can harm someone easily. (Student)

The participants noted that one of the negative effects on TVET enrolment is the level of public ignorance on the subsector. The general norms of society are that people do not want to be known to be associated with failures. Once it knows that the TVET subsector is opened to those who have failed their basic education examination, it would not seem to be attractive to the intelligent students who have passed well their basic school examination. Again, the assumption that the TVET subsector is known to the ground for radicals is of serious concern to the society. Education sector is known to be the place for shaping negative behavior of schoolgoing child, and therefore parents would prefer to have their wards in the school that they would be reform but not to compound the negative behavior that was frowned upon by the society. Because the TVET subsector had failed

to address such concerns of the public that a negative belief has crept a brilliant motive behind the subsector. In this respect, stakeholders would need to position TVET at the level that public would understand the TVET subsector. It is therefore important that the criteria used in admitting the students to TVET and rules and regulation of students should be considered to erase that perception. For instance, public engagement and education should be intensified.

Low societal recognition/job prestige

As participants pointed out, TVET societal recognition or job prestige plays a key in motivating public in choosing a certain career. The majority of the participants revealed that TVET is a great opportunity to reach the potential employment. However, there is low societal recognition or job prestige in the context of Ghana society for those in the TVET subsector due to the informal approach in learning. In fact, to be recognized to give even position in the society requires a certain profession. Below are some of the excerpts gathered from the interviews from the participants:

Society respects lawyers, doctors, accountants, and teachers more than electricians, masons, and fashion designers. The day my mother told me that when she told her friend that she would be sending me to TVET to learn fashion design, her friend said: "These days that everybody wants their children to be known for good jobs and higher recognition, you are taking your child to a school where when she finishes, she will be sewing for people. When we meet at church, do you see those who are given the opportunity to take a position or do something for the church, and do you see anyone from the fashion designers or TVET subsector?" (Student)

The participants admitted that for someone to even honor in religious space comes with certain respected enviable profession. In this context, a classic example is that when Ghana wanted to appoint TVET ambassadors and role models, it sought those who are in media industry and music industry than TVET professionals who have been in the industry for long-time like engineers. This is an indication that those in the TVET subsector in Ghanaian society are largely not in recognition in agenda of the Ghana government in promoting TVET. In case like this, parents or even students would not prefer to be in that subsector since those who are role models are from different industries. In line with this, there is a particular attention given to students in a certain category in the educational sector in Ghana as a student revealed:

We are not celebrated like those in grammar-based schools. The public does not know when we (TVET students) write our final exams, but when those in grammar-based schools are writing WASSCE (Final examination), everybody knows about it, radio and TV will say it, you will hear more wishes to grammar students. When you hear public crying out for helps or government is spending on infrastructure is grammar-based schools not TVET subsector. (Student)

As one of the teachers hinted, other professionals are respected so much in the society and such professional principles are being followed each time one seeks their service. In the case of TVET professionals, one who sought service want to determine what do be done or what to pay as your charges for the work done. In expressing concern, the teacher further put across the statement:

This stems from the artisan's treatment in terms of the respect and money owed to them after the work is completed. Mostly, an artisan will complete his work and the owners of the job will determine how much he or she will be paid. The artisan, meanwhile, when such people seek the service of other professionals like medical doctors or lawyers, is ready to pay any bill that will be given. The teacher strongly believes that artisans in this country are not paid well.

Participants pointed out that the TVET subsector lacks certain quality when it comes to organization. Many professionals are into unions that defend and protect their interest with regard to the work. For instance, in Ghana, doctors, teachers and nurses have an association that are recognized legally and that take decision collectively; therefore, their actions are recognized by the society but for those in the TVET subsector there are no such things that make it difficult collectively to demand certain things for the society. This an excerpt from a parent on the issue's societal recognition on TVET:

Members of the community view TVET professionals as not well organized and not well regulated in their operations. Other professions are regulated, and the service delivery is based on the standard acceptance of the profession. (Parent)

Generally, the majority of the participants are of the view that TVET lacks the recognition from the public in Ghana. The society is concerned about the respect one carried, and it seen as the highest human dignity. It is therefore a concern by many to be recognized and respected of the impact and contribution one's profession given to society. Considering the fact that professionals like doctors and the other non-TVET profession are the only groups giving opportunity hold position in various level in the society does not serve well for many parents who would like to encourage their wards to take on TVET program as a profession. Beyond the non-monetary value, one of the essences for considering a profession is also the money involved. When the TVET subsector in Ghana does not come with clear wages that can be received and such is determined by the owner of the job it becomes challenging for people to be jealous to join such a profession. This action is a sign for young people not paying much attention in the subsector even when there is the potential of becoming employed.

Discussion and conclusion

The study aimed to find out the role of public perception on TVET enrollment in Ghana. The study has presented findings on public perception by participants on TVET in Ghana on enrollment. The study is grounded on impression formation theory. This theory was anchored on the bases of people from opinion or decision based on little or no knowledge about the issues. This theory provided an understanding how public belief in an information is based on little or no knowledge to form an opening against a phenomenon such as the TVET subsector. As cited by Prinzhorn (2013), a subconscious and spontaneous process of establishing opinions on new people or the environment is referred to as 'making an impression'. Such beliefs are frequently based on little-known facts about the subject, yet they shape how people interact with others or their surroundings.

Findings show that public ignorance plays a key role in public enrollment in the TVET subsector such as TVET that is meant for failures, radicals, smokers and drinkers. The findings were based on the experience of the stakeholders (school staff, students and parents) of TVET. They suggest that the mindset that people have of the TVET subsector is

that has been dominated by people who are academically weak, underprivileged in society and school dropouts (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011; Yangben & Seniwoliba, 2014). The participants in the study express sense of worry to the development that affects the TVET subsector and agree that a deliberate discussion on how to clear this misconception among the public must be initiated. From the study, it is clear that there is lack of information or knowledge about TVET in public and its importance to socioeconomic. For instance, the public consistently believe that TVET is meant for failures, radicals, smokers, drunks and not respected, not well paid, unfair treatment and not well organized. Such an image affects people's choices and opinions regarding their desire in enrolling in the TVET industry. The theory of impression formation has contributed immensely toward understanding development contexts. Whilst numerous empirical studies and theoretical debates have demonstrated substantial contribution to knowledge that people really form opinion on issues not because they have information and knowledge help shape the thought negative about TVET. The views of participants agree with Essel et al. (2014) that the TVET subsector is known to be an institution for those who could not make into grammar-based school and it does not matter whether one has informal education or not. Essel et al. (2014) further stated that lack of discipline among some students in the subsector places the institution in the negative sight of the public.

From the findings of the study, it is evident that the public view TVET as low societal recognition or low job prestige as TVET is not respected, not well paid, unfair treatment and not well organized. It was clear from the findings that participants were worried about TVET professionals not recognized with their impact on Ghana socioeconomic. From this assertion of the study, partly are agreed in the literature, for instance (Ayonmike et al., 2015; Essel et al., 2014; Gaba & Mishra, 2016; Song & Tang, 2016), some TVET graduates are less recognized in the society due to the lack of employment, less paid and only foremen and subordinate to their co-workers who had general academic training or learning but findings from Hanushek et al., 2017; Leyaro & Joseph, 2019; OECD, 2018 partly disagree with the less payment for TVET graduates as they revealed that TVET graduates have a better chance of getting job than general education graduates and generally earn more than their general education counterparts. The theory of impression formation has contributed immensely toward understanding the development contexts. Whilst numerous empirical studies and theoretical debates have demonstrated substantial contribution to knowledge that people really form opinion on issues not because they have information and such help knowledge shapes the negative thought about TVET. This information revealed by the participants agrees with the study conducted by Sail et al. (2015) and Hong et al. (2022) that society failing to recognize the importance of TVET and showing the respect are effects of TVET professions losing out on the job prestige.

In general, the study agrees with the Ghana Education Service in the Ghana Education Strategy Plan for 2018–2030 report, which states that poor public perception in TVET is a negative contributing factor to the promotion of TVET in Ghana (Ghana Ministry of Education, 2018). The findings of the study align with existing literature, and the public have little knowledge of TVET, specifically its importance to the socioeconomic. This action is the public form any opinion about the subsector that has led to unattractiveness subsector for many young people. It is therefore important for the government to take initiative and address the public perception in the subsector to enable growth to take place.

Limitations and implications of the study

The study selected qualitative approach and, therefore, used few number of (36) participants, which constrains the generalizability of the findings, and this may be prone to bias (e.g. Gartner, 2007). However, the study is vital in the discourses of perception in the TVET subsector affecting enrolment in Ghana. By implication, this article is advocating for more public sensitization and counseling to articulate why it is important for parent and guidance to enroll their wards in the TVET subsector in the Ghanaian educational sector. It is the expectation of this article that the government should act on various issues to address public perception on TVET. Therefore, action must be taken in this direction.

Firstly, policy should be enacted that will project TVET education. This policy must set agenda that intensified education on TVET through print and electronic media at least twice in a week including showcasing success stories and documentaries on the TVET sector in Ghana and beyond on its impact on the socioeconomic development.

Government and other stakeholders should institute programs like TVET quiz and exhibition for students in the TVET schools to showcase their talents. On the exhibition, government can set a day when all TVET schools in Ghana will show projects done just like farmer's day. This could identify TVET ambassadors whose background is in TVET education to promote the sector.

Thirdly, policies that regularize and standardize the activities of artisans in Ghana to be developed and enforced. This policy should create avenues for artisans to operate with only professional certificates and also a retirement plan for them when they grow old. The Government of Ghana should begin to engage local artisans from TVET by awarding contracts to them on full scale. In that shed the government should well appoint people with TVET background to be holding national position as it serves as motivation for people in that sector.

The government should also develop a policy that will grant tax relief for industries that hire TVET professionals, both foreign and local, and such funds should be directed to the development of the sector such as improving infrastructure and environment.

Finally, there should be career guidance and counseling units operational in all junior high schools to educate and encourage the students to appreciate a career in TVET. Talk shows and industrial visits to TVET-related organizations will be useful interventions. This will create awareness and shape the interest of students to have knowledge on TVET to consider it as a positive career path.

Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge Japan Motors Ghana Limited for sponsoring this research.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This was funded by the Japan Motor Company Limited. The Japan Motor Company Limited is into automatic; therefore, its passion for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is

incredible. To make a case for why TVET is important in shaping a country's industrialization, the company do assist and sponsors individuals or groups who have studies to conduct in TVET perspective on how to promote TVET in Ghana.

ORCID

Emmanuel Intsiful  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6033-1424>

References

- Afeti, G. (2018). Revitalizing technical and vocational education and training in Africa: Issues outstanding. *Journal of Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education and Training*, 1(1), xi–xviii. <https://doi.org/10.14426/jovacet.v1i1.9>
- Anane, C. A. (2013). Competency based training: Quality delivery for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions. *Educational Research International*, 2(2), 117–127.
- Ansah, S. K., & Kissi, E. (2013). Technical and vocational education and training in Ghana: A tool for skill acquisition and industrial development. *Journal of Education & Practice*, 4(16), 172–180.
- Aring, M. (2015). *ASEAN economic community 2015: Enhancing competitiveness and employability through skill development*. ILO.
- Asare-Danso, S. (2014). Historical study of vocational and technical education in Ghana (1828–2010): A review of basel mission educational policy. *International Journal of Pedagogy, Policy and ICT in Education*, 4(1), 124–142.
- Ayonmike, C. S., Okwelle, P. C., & Okeke, B. C. (2015). Towards quality technical vocational education and training (TVET) programmes in Nigeria: Challenges and improvement strategies. *Journal of Education & Learning*, 4(1), 25–34. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v4n1p25>
- Bhurtel, A. (2015). Technical and vocational education and training in workforce development. *Journal of Training and Development*, 1, 77–84. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jtd.v1i0.13094>
- Biavaschi, C., Zimmermann, K. F., Eichhorst, W., Giulietti, C., Kendzia, M. J., Muravyev, A., & Schmidl, R. (2013). Youth unemployment and vocational training. *Foundations and Trends® in Microeconomics*, 9(1–2), 1–157. <https://doi.org/10.1561/07000000058>
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training). (2011). Vocational education and training for the common good: The macrosocial benefits of VET, Cedefop research paper no. 13. Publications Office of the European Union, viewed April 2016.
- Choo, C. W., Detlor, B., & Turnbull, D. (2013). *Web work: Information seeking and knowledge work on the World Wide Web* (Vol. 1). Springer Science & Business Media.
- Council for Technical and Vocational Education. (2020). TVET Transformation. *Building a robust TVET system to transform Ghana*.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE Publications Ltd. 1 Oliver's Yard 55 City Road London EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom.
- Darvas, P., & Palmer, R. (2014). *Demand and supply of skills in Ghana: How can training programs improve employment and productivity?* World Bank Publications. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-0280-5>
- Dasmani, A. (2011). Challenges facing technical institute graduates in practical skills acquisition in the upper east region of Ghana. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 12(2), 67.
- Dick, B. (2015). Reflections on the SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research and what it says about Action Research and its Methodologies. *Action Research*, 13(4), 431–444. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750315573593>
- Essel, O. Q., Agyarkoh, E., Sumaila, M. S., & Yankson, P. D. (2014). TVET stigmatization in developing countries: reality or falacy?
- Frankel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2012). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education* (8th ed.).

- Gaba, A. K., & Mishra, S. (2016). Skill development through MOOC for inclusive and sustainable development: A review of policies in the Asian commonwealth countries.
- Gondwe, M., & Walenkamp, J. (2011). *Alignment of higher professional education with the needs of the local labour market: The case of Ghana*. NUFFIC and The Hague University of Applied Sciences.
- Gyimah, N. (2020). Assessment of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) on the development of the world's economy: Perspective of Africa, Asia and Europe. *Asia and Europe (February 19, 2020)*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3541072>
- Hanushek, E. A., Schwerdt, G., Woessmann, L., & Zhang, L. (2017). General education, vocational education, and labor-market outcomes over the lifecycle. *Journal of Human Resources*, 52(1), 48–87. <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.52.1.0415-7074R>
- Hong, C. M., Chee Keong, C. N., & Roslan, T. R. N. (2022). Application of the analytic hierarchy process (AHP) on factors that affect students' enrollment in TVET based on TVET instructors and students' perspectives. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 18(1), 761–774. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.400752278257683>
- ILO. (2014). *Global employment trends 2014: Risk of a jobless recovery?* International Labour Organization.
- Kingombe, C. (2012). Lessons for developing countries from experience with technical and vocational education and training. *Journal of Food Protection*, 75(7), 1243–1248. <https://doi.org/10.4315/0362-028X.JFP-12-048>
- Leyaro, V., & Joseph, C. (2019). Employment mobility and returns to technical and vocational training: Empirical evidence for Tanzania (No. 19/03). *CREDIT Research Paper*.
- Maiga, E. (2013). *Making skills development work for economic transformation in Africa: Demystifying the suit and de-stigmatizing vocational and technical education*. Retrieved May 10, 2014, 14:06 from developmentnetwork-for-economic-transformation-in-africa-demystifying-the-suit-and-de-stigmatizingvocational-and-technical-education/06-2013/
- Majumdar, S., & Araiztegui, I. (2020). *Technical, Vocational Education and Training - Reflections on the Issues Facing TVET and its Potential in the Time of COVID-19*. Colombo Plan Staff College, (CPSC). <https://pub.cpsctech.org/step04/>
- Ministry of Education Ghana. (2018). *Education strategic plan 2018-2030*.
- Ministry of Education: Republic of Ghana. (2021). *Ghana TVET report 2021*.
- Nilsson, B. (2019). The school-to-work transition in developing countries. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 55(5), 745–764. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2018.1475649>
- Noguera, M., Alvarez, C., & Urbano, D. (2013). Socio-cultural factors and female entrepreneurship. *International Entrepreneurship & Management Journal*, 9(2), 183–197. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-013-0251-x>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2018). *The future of education and skills: Education 2030. OECD Education Working Papers*.
- Pongo, N. A., & Obinnim, E. (2015). Changing landscape of industry practice: The role of quality technical vocational education and training in Ghana. *Arts and Design Studies*, 33, 1–8.
- Prinzhorn, H. (2013). *Artistry of the mentally ill: A contribution to the psychology and psychopathology of configuration*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Rahi, S. (2017). Research design and methods: A systematic review of research paradigms, sampling issues and instruments development. *International Journal of Economics and Management Sciences*, 6(2), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2162-6359.1000403>
- The Republic of Ghana. (1992). *The constitution of Ghana*. Art. 25.
- Russo, G., Brainbridge, S., & Dunke, T. (2013). *Benefits of Vocational Education and Training in Europe for People, Organisations and Countries* Cedofop-European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. <https://doi.org/10.2801/18161>
- Sail, R. M., Alavi, K., & Ismail, I. A. (2015). Image and students' loyalty towards technical and vocational education and training* 8. *Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET) in Malaysia: Selected Works*, 7(1), 153.
- Saunders, C., & Shlomo, N. (2021). A new approach to assess the normalization of differential rates of protest participation. *Quality & Quantity*, 55(1), 79–102. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-020-00995-7>

- Song, T. K., & Tang, J. T. (2016). New skills at work: Managing skills challenges in ASEAN-5.
- Streeck, W. (2012). Skill and politics: General and specific. In M. R. Busemeyer & C. Trampusch (Eds.), *The political economy of collective skill formation* (pp. 317–352). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199599431.003.0012>
- Sumberg, J., Fox, L., Flynn, J., Mader, P., & Oosterom, M. (2021). Africa’s “youth employment” crisis is actually a “missing jobs” crisis. *Development Policy Review*, 39(4), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12528>
- Tarfasa, S., Ferede, T., Kebede, S., & Behailu, D. (2016). Determinants of growth of micro and small enterprises (MSEs): Empirical evidence from Ethiopia. *Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development*, (3),1–29.
- UNESCO/UNEVOC. (2013). Revisiting global trends in TVET: Reflections on theory and practice. In L. Tikly (Ed.), *International centre for technical and vocational education and training* (pp. 3–33). UNES.
- Vaismoradi, M., Jones, J., Turunen, H., & Snelgrove, S. (2016). Theme development in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 6(5). <https://doi.org/10.5430/jnep.v6n5p100>
- World Bank. Independent Evaluation Group. (2012) . *Youth employment programs: An evaluation of World Bank and international finance corporation support*. World Bank Publications.
- Yangben, P. N., & Seniwoliba, A. J. (2014). Career challenges in construction craft training in technical vocational education and training in Ghana. *International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*, 6(3), 13–29.