

Empowering Youths Through TVET For Sustainable Security and Economic Stability

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Abstract

This study investigated the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in empowering youths for sustainable security and economic stability in Nigeria. The study was conducted among selected technical institutions and skill acquisition centres across Plateau State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 120 youths enrolled in various TVET programmes across the selected institutions, and the entire population was used as the sample due to its manageable size. The study was guided by three (3) specific objectives, three (3) research questions, and three (3) hypotheses. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Youth Empowerment through TVET Questionnaire (YETVETQ). Experts in vocational education and measurement and evaluation validated the instrument, and Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha (0.836). The study analyzed the collected data using descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation, and tested hypotheses using a t-test at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that TVET programmes significantly contribute to youth empowerment by enhancing practical skills acquisition, promoting self-employment, reducing unemployment, and fostering economic independence among youths. The study further showed that effective participation in TVET programmes contributes to sustainable security by reducing youth involvement in crime and social vices. However, the study identified challenges such as inadequate funding, obsolete training equipment, insufficient qualified instructors, and weak linkages between training institutions and industries as major constraints to effective TVET implementation. The study concluded that TVET is a critical instrument for youth empowerment, sustainable security, and economic stability in Nigeria. It was therefore recommended that government and relevant stakeholders should increase funding for TVET programmes, modernize training facilities, strengthen industry collaboration, and implement policies that promote skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development among youths to ensure long-term national development.

Keywords: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Youth Empowerment, Sustainable Security, Economic Stability

Introduction

Youth empowerment has become a critical issue in Nigeria due to the increasing rate of unemployment, poverty, and insecurity among young people. In recent years, the inability of the formal education system to provide employable skills has contributed to a growing population of unemployed graduates. This situation has led to social challenges such as crime, restiveness, and economic instability

(Onatere-Ubrurhe & Ubrurhe, 2024). Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has emerged as a viable solution to address these challenges by equipping youths with practical and marketable skills. TVET focuses on hands-on training that prepares individuals for specific trades and occupations, thereby enhancing their capacity for self-reliance and productivity. Scholars have emphasized that

skill acquisition through TVET can significantly reduce unemployment and promote inclusive economic growth (Okoye & Arimonu, 2016; Igbongidi, 2023). Therefore, strengthening TVET programmes is essential for empowering youths and ensuring sustainable national development.

In Nigeria, the relevance of TVET has gained increasing attention as policymakers and stakeholders recognize its potential to address socio-economic challenges (Kwami, 2024). The country faces high youth unemployment rates, which have negatively affected economic growth and social stability (Chigudu, 2025). Many youths lack the technical and entrepreneurial skills needed to participate effectively in the labor market. TVET programmes provide an alternative pathway by offering practical training in areas such as carpentry, electrical installation, tailoring, and information technology (Onatere-Ubrurhe & Ubrurhe, 2024). These skills enable youths to become self-employed and contribute to economic development. According to Afeti (2018), TVET plays a significant role in bridging the gap between education and employment by aligning training with industry needs. However, despite its importance, the implementation of TVET in Nigeria is still faced with several challenges, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and limited access to modern training facilities.

Furthermore, the relationship between youth empowerment and sustainable security cannot be overlooked. Youths who are unemployed and lack productive engagement are more likely to engage in criminal activities and social vices (Chigudu, 2025). This situation poses a serious threat to national security and stability. TVET programmes help to reduce these risks by providing youths with opportunities for gainful employment and personal development (Kwami, 2024). When young people acquire relevant skills, they are better equipped to contribute positively to

society and less likely to engage in destructive behaviors. Studies have shown that investment in skill development programmes can lead to a significant reduction in crime rates and social unrest (Ogwo, 2018; Oviawe, 2020). Promoting TVET is not only an economic strategy but also a security measure that contributes to national peace and stability.

Economic stability is another important aspect that is closely linked to youth empowerment through TVET. A skilled workforce is essential for the growth and competitiveness of any economy. TVET equips youths with the competencies required to participate in various sectors of the economy, thereby increasing productivity and innovation (Onatere-Ubrurhe & Ubrurhe, 2024). In addition, TVET promotes entrepreneurship by encouraging youths to start their own businesses and create employment opportunities for others. This contributes to wealth creation and reduces dependence on government jobs. According to UNESCO (2021), countries that invest in vocational education and skills development tend to experience higher levels of economic growth and reduced income inequality. In Nigeria, strengthening TVET can therefore play a crucial role in achieving sustainable economic development and improving the standard of living of citizens (Kwami, 2024).

Despite the numerous benefits of TVET, several challenges continue to hinder its effectiveness in Nigeria. These challenges include inadequate funding, outdated training equipment, lack of qualified instructors, and weak collaboration between training institutions and industries (Chigudu, 2025). In many cases, TVET programmes are not aligned with current labor market demands, which limits their impact on employment generation (Afeti, 2018). Additionally, societal perceptions that undervalue vocational education discourage many youths from enrolling in TVET programmes. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive

approach that involves government intervention, private sector participation, and policy reforms (Onatere-Ubrurhe & Ubrurhe, 2024). There is a need to modernize training facilities, improve curriculum design, and strengthen industry linkages to ensure that TVET programmes remain relevant and effective.

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of the study was to examine the role of TVET in empowering youths for sustainable security and economic stability in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the extent to which Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) enhances youth empowerment in Nigeria.
2. assess how participation in TVET programmes influences sustainable security among youths.
3. evaluate the influence of TVET on economic stability through youth employment and entrepreneurship.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) enhance youth empowerment in Nigeria?
2. How does participation in TVET programmes influence sustainable security among youths?
3. What is the effect of TVET on economic stability through youth employment and entrepreneurship?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has no significant effect on youth empowerment in Nigeria.

2. Participation in TVET programmes has no significant influence on sustainable security among youths.
3. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has no significant effect on economic stability in Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design using a structured questionnaire to gather data on youths' perceptions, experiences, and outcomes of participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes. The study was conducted among selected twenty (20) technical institutions and skill acquisition centres in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study population consisted of 120 youths enrolled in various TVET programmes, and because the population was manageable, the entire population was used as the sample through a census sampling approach. The researcher collected data using a structured questionnaire titled Youth Empowerment through TVET Questionnaire (YETVETQ), developed with Likert-scale items. The instrument was divided into sections covering respondents' biodata and variables related to youth empowerment, sustainable security, and economic stability. Experts in vocational education and measurement and evaluation validated the instrument to ensure face and content Validity. Reliability was established through a pilot study using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.836, indicating high internal consistency. Data collection was based on primary sources through direct administration of the questionnaire to respondents. Data analysis used descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while inferential statistics, specifically the t-test, were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does Training (TVET) enhance youth Technical and Vocational Education and empowerment in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on TVET and Youth Empowerment

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	TVET improves practical skill acquisition among youths	3.62	0.78	Agree
2	TVET enhances self-employment opportunities	3.58	0.81	Agree
3	TVET promotes entrepreneurial development	3.55	0.84	Agree
4	TVET reduces youth unemployment	3.60	0.76	Agree
5	TVET increases youths' economic independence	3.64	0.72	Agree
Grand Mean		3.60	0.78	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 1 shows that all five items recorded mean scores above the decision benchmark of 2.50, with item means ranging from 3.55 to 3.64. The highest-rated item was that TVET increases youths' economic independence (Mean = 3.64, SD = 0.72), followed by improvement in practical skill acquisition (Mean = 3.62, SD = 0.78) and reduction in youth unemployment (Mean = 3.60, SD = 0.76). The grand mean of 3.60 (SD = 0.78) indicates that respondents generally perceived TVET as enhancing youth empowerment to a great extent through

practical skills, self-employment, entrepreneurship, reduced unemployment, and greater economic independence. Thus, Research Question One is answered in the affirmative: TVET enhances youth empowerment among the respondents. The statistical significance of this observed pattern is determined separately under Hypothesis One.

Research Question 2: How does participation in TVET programmes influence sustainable security among youths?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on TVET and Sustainable Security

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	TVET reduces youth involvement in crime	3.50	0.85	Agree
2	TVET promotes positive social behavior	3.56	0.88	Agree
3	TVET encourages lawful means of livelihood	3.55	0.80	Agree
4	TVET reduces social vices among youths	3.58	0.83	Agree
5	TVET enhances community peace and stability	3.52	0.79	Agree
Grand Mean		3.50	0.83	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 2 shows that all five items recorded mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark. The item means ranged from 3.50 to 3.58, indicating consistent agreement that participation in TVET is associated with reduced involvement in crime and social vices, more positive social behaviour, lawful means of livelihood, and improved community peace and stability. The grand mean of 3.50 (SD = 0.83) therefore indicates that respondents

perceived TVET participation as contributing positively to sustainable security among youths. Accordingly, Research Question Two is answered positively. Hypothesis Two tests whether this perceived influence is statistically significant.

Research Question 3: What is the effect of TVET on economic stability through youth employment and entrepreneurship?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on TVET and Economic Stability

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	TVET increases employment opportunities	3.59	0.77	Agree
2	TVET promotes entrepreneurship among youths	3.61	0.75	Agree
3	TVET contributes to income generation	3.57	0.79	Agree
4	TVET reduces poverty level	3.54	0.82	Agree
5	TVET enhances economic productivity	3.60	0.76	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.58	0.78	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 3 shows that all five items recorded mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark, with item means ranging from 3.54 to 3.61. Respondents rated the promotion of entrepreneurship highest (Mean = 3.61, SD = 0.75), followed by enhanced economic productivity (Mean = 3.60, SD = 0.76) and increased employment opportunities (Mean = 3.59, SD = 0.77). The grand mean of 3.58 (SD = 0.78) indicates that respondents generally perceived TVET as positively influencing

economic stability through employment creation, entrepreneurship, income generation, poverty reduction, and improved productivity. Thus, Research Question Three is answered positively. The statistical significance of this influence is tested under Hypothesis Three.

Hypothesis 1: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has no significant effect on youth empowerment in Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of TVET and Youth Empowerment

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	t-value	p-value	Decision
TVET	120	3.60	0.78	5.84	0.000	Rejected

Table 4 reports a t-value of 5.84 with $p < .001$. Since the reported p-value is below the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which states that TVET has no significant influence on youth empowerment in Nigeria, is rejected. Based on the reported test result, TVET has a statistically significant influence on youth empowerment. This inferential result supports

the descriptive finding in Research Question One, where respondents strongly agreed that TVET improves practical skill acquisition, self-employment opportunities, entrepreneurial development, employment prospects, and economic independence.

Hypothesis 2: Participation in TVET programmes has no significant influence on sustainable security among youths.

Table 5 t-test Analysis of TVET and Sustainable Security

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	t-value	p-value	Decision
TVET	120	3.50	0.83	4.96	0.001	Rejected

Table 5 reports a t-value of 4.96 and a p-value of .001. Because the p-value is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_{02}), which states that participation in TVET programmes has no significant influence on sustainable security among youths, is rejected. The reported test therefore indicates a statistically significant

influence of TVET participation on sustainable security among the respondents. This finding is consistent with the descriptive result for Research Question Two, where respondents agreed that TVET helps to reduce crime and social vices, encourages lawful livelihoods, promotes positive social

behaviour, and contributes to community peace and stability.

Hypothesis Three: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has no significant effect on economic stability in Nigeria.

Table 6: t-test Analysis of TVET and Economic Stability

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	t-value	p-value	Decision
TVET	120	3.58	0.78	5.42	0.000	Rejected

Table 6 reports a t-value of 5.42 with $p < .001$. Since the reported p-value is below the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_{03}), which states that TVET has no significant influence on economic stability in Nigeria, is rejected. Based on the reported test, TVET has a statistically significant influence on economic stability. This supports the descriptive result for Research Question Three, which showed that respondents associated TVET with increased employment opportunities, entrepreneurship, income generation, poverty reduction, and improved economic productivity.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding concerns youth empowerment. Respondents strongly agreed that TVET improves practical skill acquisition, supports self-employment and entrepreneurship, reduces unemployment, and strengthens economic independence, as reflected in the grand mean of 3.60 (SD = 0.78). The corresponding hypothesis test reported $t = 5.84$ with $p < .001$; therefore, H_{01} was rejected at the 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive results show the direction of respondents' perceptions, while the inferential test provides the basis for the statistical decision. This finding is consistent with Okoye and Arimonu (2016) and Igbongidi (2023), who reported that vocational and technical skills development can improve employability, support enterprise development, and reduce dependence on limited white-collar employment opportunities.

The second finding relates to sustainable security. The grand mean of 3.50 (SD = 0.83) indicates that respondents generally agreed that participation in TVET is associated with reduced involvement in crime and social vices, greater use of lawful means of livelihood, positive social behaviour, and improved community peace and stability. The hypothesis test reported $t = 4.96$ and $p = .001$, leading to the rejection of H_{02} . Based on the reported test, participation in TVET had a statistically significant influence on sustainable security among respondents. This result agrees with Oviawe (2020), who linked skills development and productive youth engagement with reduced restiveness and improved social stability.

The third finding concerns economic stability. Respondents agreed that TVET promotes employment opportunities, entrepreneurship, income generation, poverty reduction, and economic productivity, producing a grand mean of 3.58 (SD = 0.78). The reported hypothesis tests yielded $t = 5.42$ with $p < .001$, leading to rejection of H_{03} . Thus, the study's reported statistical result supports a significant influence of TVET on economic stability. This finding is consistent with UNESCO (2021) and Chigudu (2025), which, as cited in this study, connect vocational skills development with productivity, employment, entrepreneurship, and broader economic participation. Taken together, the three findings indicate that respondents viewed TVET positively in relation to youth empowerment, security, and economic stability. Because the study used a descriptive survey design, these findings

should be interpreted as evidence from respondents' reported perceptions and the stated statistical tests rather than as proof of experimental causation.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a vital tool for empowering youths and promoting sustainable security and economic stability in Nigeria. The findings show that TVET significantly enhances skill acquisition, supports self-employment, reduces youth involvement in crime, and contributes to economic development. Despite these positive impacts, challenges such as inadequate funding, obsolete facilities, and weak industry linkage limit its effectiveness. Therefore, strengthening TVET through improved investment, modern infrastructure, and stronger collaboration with industries is essential for achieving long-term national development.

Recommendations

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- Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:
1. The government should increase funding for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes to ensure the provision of modern training equipment, improved infrastructure, and adequate learning facilities in technical institutions and skill acquisition centres.
 2. There should be stronger collaboration between TVET institutions and industries to align training with current labor market demands, enhance practical exposure, and improve employment opportunities for graduates.
 3. Policymakers should implement and promote policies that encourage youth participation in TVET, including entrepreneurship support programmes, awareness campaigns, and incentives that will enhance skill acquisition and reduce unemployment.
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