

Strategies for Increasing Students' Enrolment in Government Technical Colleges in Ondo State

by

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Abstract

This study investigates strategies to enhance student enrollment in government technical colleges in Ondo State, Nigeria. Adopting a descriptive survey design, the research sampled 115 respondents, including students and teachers across five government technical colleges. Data collection was facilitated using a validated and reliable questionnaire, achieving a reliability coefficient of 0.85 through the test-retest method. Descriptive statistics and t-tests were employed for data analysis. Findings reveal key factors contributing to low enrollment, such as poor societal perceptions of technical education, insufficient career awareness, limited exposure to technical fields, and the absence of effective career counseling. Guidance counselors' efforts, such as inviting role models and interpreting vocational information, were found to moderately influence enrollment but require enhancement in delivering comprehensive career guidance. Parental involvement, including financial support and career planning, emerged as significant but underutilized strategies. Gender-based disparities in perceptions were also noted, with males highlighting barriers more prominently while females perceived greater support from counselors and parents. The study underscores the urgent need for multi-stakeholder interventions, including awareness campaigns, improved funding, career guidance, and targeted gender-sensitive strategies. Recommendations include government-led initiatives to reposition technical education, enhanced parental and community involvement, and capacity-building for counselors. These measures aim to align technical education with labor market demands, fostering sustainable development and workforce self-reliance.

Keywords: Technical Education, Enrollment Strategies, Vocational Education, Career Counseling, Parental Involvement

Introduction

Technical colleges are instrumental in equipping individuals with the practical skills and knowledge essential for modern industries and the labor market. The National Board for Technical Education [NBTE] (2021) defined technical colleges as specialized institutions focused on training individuals in practical and technical skills to promote self-reliance and societal development. The objectives of technical colleges include providing trained manpower in applied science, technology, and business at craft and technical levels; imparting technical knowledge and vocational skills to enhance agricultural, commercial, and economic development; and fostering self-reliance among graduates (NBTE, 2011). These goals align with broader national

development aspirations, where a skilled workforce serves as a catalyst for industrialization, technological innovation, and economic growth.

Despite these commendable objectives, technical colleges in Nigeria face significant challenges that undermine their effectiveness. These challenges include inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, limited access to modern equipment, and a shortage of qualified instructors. Additionally, societal perceptions of technical education as a less prestigious alternative to conventional academic pathways have contributed to low enrollment rates in technical colleges. Studies have shown that parents, teachers, and even students often view technical education as a fallback option for those unable to excel in

conventional academics (Aina, 2006; Ibeneme, 2007). This stigma further discourages students from pursuing technical education, exacerbating the skills gap in Nigeria's workforce.

The current state of enrollment in Nigerian technical colleges is alarming. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) prescribes that 20% of junior secondary school graduates should transition to technical colleges. However, enrollment figures are far below this target. For instance, during the 2019/2020 academic session, only 74,299 students enrolled in technical colleges, compared to 6,625,943 in secondary schools, representing a mere 9.3% of the expected target (NBTE, 2021). This stark contrast highlights the urgent need to address the barriers to enrollment and reposition technical colleges as viable and attractive educational pathways.

Globally, technical and vocational education (TVE) is recognized as a cornerstone of sustainable development. Countries with advanced economies invest heavily in TVE, ensuring alignment between educational outcomes and industry needs. In contrast, developing countries like Nigeria struggle to provide the necessary resources and policy support for TVE to thrive. Research indicates that robust TVE systems contribute significantly to reducing unemployment, fostering entrepreneurship, and driving industrial growth (Okolocha & Baba, 2016; Federal Ministry of Education, 2018). However, Nigeria's underfunded and undervalued technical colleges are ill-equipped to fulfill these roles, necessitating urgent reforms and strategic interventions.

Recent studies have highlighted the multifaceted challenges facing technical education in Nigeria. For instance, a 2023 evaluation of enrollment trends into technical education programs at Nnamdi Azikiwe University revealed intermittent negative fluctuations over the past decade, with enrollment quotas as low as 6% in certain academic years. The study also noted a significant gender disparity, with female enrollment markedly lower than that of

males (Auta, Agbo, & Anih, 2023). Additionally, the Federal Government has acknowledged issues such as outdated curricula, obsolete equipment, low enrollment of girls, and inadequate teacher remuneration as key factors contributing to the decline in technical education enrollment (Tribune Online, 2023).

To address these challenges, various strategies have been proposed. Public awareness campaigns aimed at changing societal perceptions, partnerships between industries and educational institutions, and the integration of innovative and flexible curricula that reflect labor market demands are among the effective strategies identified (Alawa, 2019; Yakubu, 2006). Furthermore, parental involvement, career guidance, and adequate government funding have been recognized as critical factors influencing enrollment decisions (Gaunt, 2005; Ladipo, 2013). Implementing these strategies is essential for revitalizing technical education in Nigeria and ensuring it meets the evolving needs of the economy.

This study is particularly significant as it seeks to identify and implement strategies to enhance enrollment in government technical colleges in Ondo State. By examining the factors responsible for low enrollment and proposing actionable solutions, this research aims to contribute to the revitalization of technical education in Nigeria. Enhancing enrollment in technical colleges is not only essential for equipping individuals with employable skills but also for addressing Nigeria's rising unemployment rates and fostering sustainable economic development. Therefore, this study aligns with national and global priorities, emphasizing the transformative potential of technical education in building a skilled and self-reliant workforce.

Purpose of the study

The general objective of this study is to explore effective strategies for enhancing enrolment in government technical colleges in Ondo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Identify the key factors contributing to low enrolment in government technical colleges in Ondo State.
2. Examine the strategies that can be employed by guidance counselors to enhance student enrolment in government technical colleges in Ondo State.
3. Examine the techniques parents can use in promoting enrolment in government technical colleges in Ondo State.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population consists of students and teachers in five government technical colleges in Ondo State: Owo, Okitipupa, Oka Akoko, Idanre, and Oke-Igbo, totaling 527 students and 143 teachers. Sampling used a multistage technique, selecting 115 respondents (80 students and 35 teachers), with 16 students and 7 teachers from each college to ensure diversity. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Analyses of Techniques for Enhancing Student Enrollment in Government Technical Colleges in Ondo State, Nigeria"

Socio-Demographic Information of the Respondents

Table 1: Respondents Socio-Demographic

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	81	70.4
Female	34	29.6
Total	115	100.0
Status		
Students	80	69.6
Teachers	35	30.4
Total	115	100.0
Age		
5 – 26years	76	66.1
26 – 36years	7	6.1
37years and above	32	27.8
Total	115	100.0

Table 1 presents the demographic distribution of the 115 respondents who participated in this study. Among them, 81 (70.4%) are male, while 34 (29.6%) are female, indicating that the majority of the

(ATEESGTC). Section A collected personal data, and Section B, using a Likert scale (1–4), gathered responses related to the study's questions. Validity was ensured by having the draft reviewed by the researcher's supervisor and three experts in Vocational and Technical Education at Adekunle Ajasin University, who provided feedback for revisions. For reliability, a test-retest method was used, administering the questionnaire to 20 non-sample respondents twice, two weeks apart. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.85. Data collection involved distributing questionnaires to respondents with assistance from research aides. The completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately to avoid loss. For data analysis, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used for the research questions, and t-tests were used for hypothesis testing. Items with a mean response of 2.50 or above were considered agreed, and the null hypothesis was rejected if the t-value was less than the alpha value of 0.05.

Results

respondents are male. Additionally, 80 respondents (69.6%) are students, whereas 35 (30.4%) are teachers, showing that students constitute the majority of the sample.

Regarding age distribution, 76 (27.8%) are 37 years or older. This indicates that the largest proportion of respondents are within the younger age group of 5–26 years. 76 respondents (66.1%) fall within the age range of 5–26 years, 7 respondents (6.1%) are aged 26–36 years, and 32 respondents

Table 2: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the causes of Low Enrolment in Government Technical Colleges

Statement	Mean (X̄)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Remark
Poor societal perception causes low enrolment in Government technical colleges?	3.0	1.2	Agreed
Lack of exposure of students to the world of work through work-visits affects enrolment?	3.0	0.9	Agreed
Lack of career awareness causes low enrolment in Government technical colleges?	2.6	1.4	Disagreed
Government's lukewarm attitude towards Vocational Education	3.2	1.6	Agreed
Lack of career counsellor(s) causes low enrolment in Government technical colleges?	3.2	1.6	Agreed
Weighted Mean Score:	3.00		

The weighted mean score of 3.00 as revealed in Table 2 suggests that, on the whole, respondents generally agree that the factors listed in the table contribute to low enrollment in Government Technical Colleges. The mean score of 3.00, which is on the "Agreed" side of the scale, indicates a consensus among the respondents that these factors, including societal perception, lack of exposure to the world of work, lack of career

awareness, the government’s attitude toward vocational education, and the absence of career counselors, play a significant role in affecting enrollment. However, the standard deviations, which range from 0.9 to 1.6, show some variability in the responses, meaning that while there is general agreement, opinions on the severity or importance of these factors differ to some extent among the respondents.

Table 3: T-test of the Mean Responses of the Respondents on the causes of Low Enrolment in Government Technical Colleges

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Critical-value	P
Causes of low enrolment							
Male	81	9.2469	2.79969	114	29.286	1.96	>.05
Female	34	9.1176	3.01275				
Total	115	9.2087	2.85158				

NB: S = Significant at, 05 alpha (p>.05)

The results showed a significant difference between male and female teachers and students of technical colleges regarding the causes of low enrollment [t(114) = 29.286, t₀.05 = 1.96, p < 0.05, t* > t₀.05]. Male students (M = 9.2469) scored higher than their female counterparts (M = 9.1176). This indicates a difference in the responses of male and female teachers and students

about the causes of low enrollment in technical colleges. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the t-tabulated value, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming a significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers and students regarding the causes of low

enrollment in government technical colleges in Ondo State.

Table 4: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Guidance Counselor’s Techniques that can enhance Enrolment of Students in Government Technical Colleges

Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1. Guidance counsellors provide students with the knowledge of the advantages and limitations of each occupation in Vocational Education	2.3	1.2	Disagree
2. Guidance counsellor helps students to understand themselves better, so they can develop an understanding of their opportunities and acquire the ability in Vocational Education programmes	2.8	0.8	Agree
3. Guidance counsellor assists in interpreting and using information concerning the characteristics, needs, and opportunities available to students in Vocational Education programmes	2.6	0.8	Agree
4. Guidance counsellor helps in inviting successful entrepreneurs in all areas of technical and vocational education in schools to give career talks and serve as role models to create awareness to students	2.8	0.9	Agree

Weighted Mean Score: 2.62

The results, based on the weighted mean score of 2.62 (above the standard mean of 2.50), suggest that respondents generally agree that guidance counsellors positively influence enrolment in Technical Colleges. However, for the statement about counsellors providing information on the advantages and limitations of vocational education occupations, respondents disagreed, with a mean score of 2.3. This indicates a gap in providing sufficient

information about career options. Respondents agreed that counsellors help students understand their opportunities, interpret relevant information, and invite role models, which positively impact enrolment in Technical Colleges. In conclusion, while guidance counsellors are seen as helpful in promoting technical education, there is room for improvement in providing comprehensive career information.

Table 5: T-test Analysis of the Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Guidance Counselor’s Techniques that can enhance Enrolment of Students in Government Technical Colleges

Enrolment of Student	N	Mean	SD	df	T	Critr-value	P
Guidance Counselor Male	81	7.1852	2.59380	114	26.010	1.96	>.05
Female	34	8.2647	2.51431				
Total	115	7.5042	2.60692				

NB: S = Significant at, 05 alpha ($p > 0.05$)

The results showed a significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers and students regarding student enrollment [$t(114) = 26.010, t_{0.05} = 1.96, p < 0.05, t^* > t_{0.05}$]. Male teachers and students had a mean of $M = 7.1852$, while female teachers and students had a mean of $M = 8.2647$. The mean for females was higher than for males, indicating a significant

difference in their responses. This finding contradicts the second hypothesis, which was rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis, stating that there is a significant difference in the responses of male and female teachers and students concerning guidance counselors' techniques for enhancing enrollment in government technical colleges in Ondo State.

Table 6: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Parental Techniques that can that can Enhance Enrolment of Students in Government Technical Colleges

Statement	Mean (\bar{X})	Standard Deviation (SD)	Remark
1. Parents should allow children to take decisions on their own based on their interest and aptitude regarding what course or program to study	3.2	1.7	Agree
2. Adequate financial support to students for buying vocational education materials in schools by parents	2.7	0.4	Agree
3. Parents should assist students in developing and executing career plans, which will help them achieve their career goals in vocational education programs	2.5	0.4	Agree
Weighted mean score: 2.8			

The weighted mean score of 2.8 suggests that, overall, the respondents agree with the statements presented regarding factors that can enhance enrollment in technical colleges. Since the weighted mean is above 2.5, it indicates that the respondents generally support the importance of parental

involvement in decision-making, financial support for vocational education materials, and assistance in career planning to improve enrollment in technical colleges. This reflects a positive attitude towards these factors as key contributors to encouraging students to enroll in technical education programs.

Table 7: T-test Analysis of the Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Parental Techniques that can that can Enhance Enrolment of Students in Government Technical Colleges

Parental Techniques	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Critr- value	P
Promoting enrolment							
Male	81	5.0247	1.72464	114	21.808	1.96	>.05
Female	34	5.9708	2.49223				
Total	115	5.3043	2.01822				

NB: S = Significant at, 05 alpha ($p > .05$)

The results showed a significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers of technical colleges regarding parental techniques [$t(114) = 21.808$, $t_{0.05} = 1.96$, $p < 0.05$, $t_a > t_{0.05}$]. Male teachers and students ($M = 5.0247$) scored lower than their female counterparts ($M = 5.9708$). Since the calculated t-value is greater than the tabulated t-value, we accept the alternative hypothesis. This indicates a significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students and teachers on parental techniques for promoting enrollment in government technical colleges in Ondo State. This finding contradicts hypothesis three,

leading to its rejection and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the factors influencing enrollment in government technical colleges, the role of guidance counselors, the importance of parental involvement, and the differences in responses based on gender. These findings are supported by relevant literature, offering a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play. The weighted mean score of 3.00, as presented in Table 2, suggests that respondents generally agree that factors such as societal perceptions of vocational

education, limited exposure to the world of work, inadequate career awareness, the government's indifferent attitude toward vocational education, and the absence of career counselors significantly contribute to low enrollment in government technical colleges. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.9 to 1.6, reveal some variability in the severity or importance attributed to these factors by respondents. These findings align with Olaitan (2020), who highlights societal bias against vocational education, and Odu (2019), who emphasizes the need for early exposure to career opportunities. Furthermore, Ayonmike et al. (2015) underscore the critical role of government support, while Egbochuku (2008) identifies the lack of qualified career counselors as a barrier to effective enrollment.

The role of guidance counselors in influencing enrollment in technical colleges was also examined. A weighted mean score of 2.62, which is above the standard mean of 2.50, indicates general agreement among respondents that guidance counselors positively impact enrollment. Specifically, respondents acknowledged that counselors help students understand their opportunities, interpret relevant career information, and connect with role models. However, a mean score of 2.3 for the provision of information about the advantages and limitations of vocational education occupations highlights a gap in the scope of career guidance provided. These findings are consistent with Osakwe (2017) and Ezeji (2016), who argue that guidance counselors often focus more on academic pathways due to limited training in vocational education counseling.

The study further identified parental involvement as a critical factor in enhancing enrollment. With a weighted mean score of 2.8, respondents agreed that parental

Recommendations

1. Government should raise awareness about vocational and technical education through campaigns, media, and community programs. Highlight the benefits and career opportunities to

decision-making, financial support for vocational education materials, and assistance in career planning are essential for encouraging enrollment. These findings are corroborated by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005), who stress the importance of active parental participation in students' educational choices, and Nwoke (2014), who highlights the role of financial support in overcoming barriers to technical education. Gender-based differences in responses also emerged as a significant finding. Male students scored higher than their female counterparts on the causes of low enrollment, indicating differing perspectives between genders. Conversely, female respondents rated the influence of guidance counselors and parental techniques more positively. These findings align with Aina and Ajibade (2019), who observe that cultural and societal expectations often result in gender-specific perceptions of vocational education. Chukwu (2018) further notes that targeted counseling efforts can positively influence female students' views on technical education. Additionally, Okebukola and Jegede (1997) highlight the need for gender-sensitive approaches to address disparities and promote equitable access to vocational programs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study underscore the multifaceted factors affecting enrollment in government technical colleges. Key areas for improvement include addressing societal biases, enhancing career counseling, increasing parental involvement, and providing financial support. Furthermore, the gender-based differences identified suggest a need for targeted interventions to ensure equitable access and representation in technical education programs.

encourage more students to consider this pathway.

2. School Administrators should train guidance counselors to provide comprehensive information about vocational education and career

prospects. Ensure schools have resources for counseling, including inviting industry professionals and role models to inspire students.

- Schools should actively involve parents in decisions about their children's education. Introduce scholarships and

subsidies for vocational materials to reduce economic barriers to enrollment.

- Government should develop programs to address enrollment disparities between male and female students. These could include targeted outreach, mentorship, and policies promoting a more inclusive environment in technical colleges.

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