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PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is an effective tool for industrialisation. However, literature exposes several setbacks in TVET; mainly an unfavourable reputation and inadequate financial support. With a sample size of 383 (parents and student), this survey was conducted to investigate parents' and students' perceptions of TVET in the Kumasi Metropolis in Ghana. The study revealed that parents perceive TVET to be for "weak" students. The students on the other hand believe that TVET will limit their academic achievements. The source of these perceptions were known to be parents, teachers, and graduates from TVET institutions. The effect of the perception of TVET is a vicious cycle of poor TVET perception which will continue to hinder the development of TVET. Retooling of the Ghanaian TVET sector is thus suggested with specific emphasis on reorientation leading to positive attitudinal change to do away with the negative tag about TVET in Ghana.

Keywords: Technical and Vocational Education and Training; Perception; Parents; students; Ghana

INTRODUCTION

In a knowledge society as seen with the 21st century where education has become the catalyst for socio-economic and industrial development, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, (TVET) has been noted to contribute significantly toward development especially industrial development (Chakroun, 2019; Essel *et al*., 2014; Odoom *et al*., 2016; Oketch *et al*., 2009). Even so, the demand for TVET has become dominant in recent times as the contemporary global market is more inclined to a skilled workforce (Dzeto, 2014).

Notwithstanding, in India, students in upper secondary Vocational Education and Training, (VET) institutions are likely to be male and belong to socially disadvantaged households whose main occupation is blue-collar. Besides, children from higher socio-economic backgrounds and status pursuing white-collar jobs tend to participate in general and professional education as compared to VET because of higher status assigned to the former in the society (Vincent & Rajasekhar, 2021).

Unlike the advanced countries, the African continent has not seen much successes in its industrial development in the past centuries even though TVET functions as an option in the educational system (Adams *et al*., 2009; Chakroun, 2019; Dzeto, 2014; Kemevor & Kassah, 2015; Odoom *et al* , 2021; Odoom *et al*., 2016 Pongo *et al*., 2014). Discussions on TVET in the African context are characterized by a lot of controversies and blur edges such as who is fit for TVET? and whether the educational option (TVET) can produce the skilled labour required in the job market. TVET in Africa is thus faced with several setbacks. Among the challenges of TVET are, gender disparity and stereotyping, inadequate financial resources, poor/inadequate infrastructure and poor image about TVET (Amedorme & Fiagbe, 2013; Ansah & Kissi, 2013; Kemevor & Kassah, 2015; UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, 2016). These challenges are valid in the Ghanaian context. The utopian result of running TVET as an educational system is to produce a skilled workforce (human capital) who can meet the labour demands of the economy (Alagaraja & Arthur-Mensah 2013; Dzeto, 2014; Essel *et al*., 2014; Evans, 1996; Odoom *et al*., 2016; UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, 2016). Today, global financial bodies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and national governments adopt the human capital theory as an approach in their dealings. Thus, countries who receive loans, grants, or donations from the fourth mentioned financial institutions are expected to boost their Gross Domestic Product through labour planning (Tikly, 2013). According to Amedorme and Fiagbe (2013), before the colonial era, when there was an informal version of TVET, artisans were revered as inventors, designers and technocrats because there was no mocking dichotomy between artisanship and intellectual abilities. The narrative is the reverse in the contemporary Ghanaian TVET arena. Academic qualifications are alleged to lead to more and better opportunities in the labour market. If this assertion is true, then governments' efforts towards improving TVET are not likely to succeed (Baffour-Awuah & Thompson 2012; Amedorme & Fiagbe, 2013). In this light, this study does not consider TVET stigmatization a fallacy but investigates parents and students' perception about TVET and how their perception affects the interests of TVET in Ghana. Final-year Junior High School students – about to make choices for second cycle education and their parents as well as TVET students (enrolled in one of oldest TVET institutions in Ghana) were sampled to understand

how the public perceive TVET in Ghana. The premise of the study was to:

1. Explore parents and students' perception about
2. Examine the source of the perception about TVET and
3. Evaluate how public perception affects TVET.

According to Pambudi and Harjanto (2019), concepts stimulate innovation and propel development. They opined that some countries across the globe have not successfully implemented TVET because the implementing stakeholders do not understand the concept. If so, then the understanding of the concept of TVET is as important as its manifestation.

Literature reveals that TVET was formed based on the needs of the industrial workforce (Alam, 2008; Law, 2012; Odoom *et al*., 2016), as such, the definition of the concept has evolved as the demands of the industries alter. Also, the concept has some geographical variance; such that, what is known as TVET in one geographical area is at times given another term in another region. For instance, the term TVET in Europe is associated with Vocational Education and Training and in the United States is known as Career and Technical Education; while it is Technical, Industrial, Vocational, and Entrepreneurial Training (TIVET) in the Kenyan context (Ngugi & Muthima, 2017). Thus, defining the concept of TVET requires a clear-cut to differentiate it from other terms (Cardoso, 2009).

The likes of Finch and Crunkilton (1999) conceptualize TVET as a form of education and training that equips people to acquire gainful employment. Definitions like that of Finch and Crunkilton mirror using TVET as a supply approach to meet the professional needs of industries because people are being trained to feed industries (acquire gainful employment). Their usage of both education and training in defining the concept exposes that education is regarded to be different from training.

Again, the world's dynamic age structure continues to change the meaning given to the concept TVET (Marope *et al*., 2015). The global congress on TVET redevelopment in Korea established the definition of TVET as a form of educational procedure that merges general education with the learning of technologies and sciences that relate to an occupation in the various sectors of economic and social life through the practical acquisition of skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge (Maclean & Wilson, 1933). This definition opines that TVET should be considered as a system that is constantly altered by the government to drive the form of education and training to meet the demands of industries. This study sides with definitions of TVET that consider it as a demand instrument needed to meet specific aspects of economic, social life and industries' professional needs.

The different rationales for investing in TVET yield different theoretical perspectives (Ananiadou, 2013). The two main theories that resonate in the TVET investment debate are the Human Capital Theory and the Social Justice Theory. Different schools of thought have considered the above-mentioned theories in understanding the role of TVET in development and the significance of investing in it. In as much as the underlining view of both theories are pinned on 'development' there are different ideologies on the approach to development and justification for the deviating ideologies. For instance, the World Bank and other economic institutions approach the development of TVET from a human capital perceptive. Thus, considers all investment made in TVET as developing the human capital for economic growth. On the other hand, the likes of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum positions TVET in social justice thinking thus argue that TVET

does not only propel economic growth but also local, social and cultural development. Although both theories add valuable insight to understanding TVET, there are limitations to both ideologies (Moodie, 2019).

The thinking of TVET from the human capital viewpoint was birthed with the history of TVET during the industrial era. The thinking was heavily criticized by Foster (1965), whose comparison of TVET emergence in Ghana and Singapore claimed a 'vocational school fallacy'. He asserted that although efforts are made to develop the human capital the contrary is achieved because there was no link between the skilled labour force TVET produced and the demands of the labour market.

The human capital theory focuses more on economic development and sees growth in Gross Domestic Product as the only development indicator. Ananiadou (2013), argues that the human capital theory places emphasis on the importance of skills to economic growth. In contrast, the likes of Anderson (2008), opines that the human capital theory is deficient of normative root such that it does not consider the environmental, social, or cultural dimensions of expertise. At this point, the positivistic bias some authors have acclaimed is evident since the human capital approach does not make room for overt considerations on issues such as equity and marginalisation when approaching TVET development. It is therefore not surprising that global financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank among others have received several backlashes and have over time acknowledged that different dimensions of expertise can make an economy grow. Contrary to the human capital theory the Social Justice theory (Human Capabilities) thinkers (Robeyns, 2003; Sen, 2002) propounded that the TVET should have an expanded view in terms of purpose. Thus, TVET's approach to development needs to support the development of people's talent not only to stimulate GDP growth but also to equip people to function as valuable assets to the community and society at large. This orientation builds on the weakness of the Human Capital theory and is seen by development writers as the "new thing" of human development. The capability theory recommends that social arrangements should be largely appraised according to the degree of autonomy people have to uphold or attain functioning they value. The theory has been adopted by academics and practitioners in many disciplines such that the literature on capability thinking is genuinely multi-disciplinary.

In theorizing the concept "Perception", three main schools of thought can be identified broadly categorized as the top-down and bottom-up theories; realism, constructivism, computational schools of thought (Démuth, 2013). Whiles the realism perception theory recognize perception as direct; not compromised by society (perception based on free exploration and non-social information) (Gordon, 2004); the constructivism perception theory see perception as an output of merger of an internal hypothesis, motivation, expectation, culture and emotions (Moodie et.al., 2019). However, these factors may interact unconsciously. The Computational theory of perception commonly applied in artificial intelligence and informatics is a hybrid of the realism and constructivism theories. It addresses the weakness of realism (perception is direct) and constructivism (perception is form motivation) by using algorithms to understand human perception (Démuth, 2013).

In studying the perception of people on TVET, the Gregory Constructive theory of Perception is adopted for this study. According to Gregory's theory (Gregory et. al, 2015), perception is an active process engineered by cognition. That is, people combine sensory information with social knowledge to form

perceptions. He argued that a prototype of reality is created mentally from a sense of impressions and inferences. So, perception is intentionally and actively constructed and altered by motivation, expectation, culture and emotions. If these factors play important role in shaping perception, then arguably there is no faultlessness or completeness of perception. Considering this weakness, this study adopts constructive theory perception with caution that the perception people have or would have about TVET is/ will not be faultless or complete, however, perception that is needed to propel development in TVET is one that to a large extent looks at TVET in a positive lens.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study setting

The study was conducted in Kumasi. Kumasi metropolis is the second largest city in Ghana situated in the Ashanti Region. This is the region with the highest number of senior high schools; about 721 senior high and vocational schools (GSS, 2013). The number of students in the Junior High School and the Senior High School accounts for about 13.2 percent of the entire population of the Ashanti Region (GSS, 2013). The availability of a high population of school going children in the metropolis presents the setting as a good location to understand perception about second cycle school choice. Specifically, to know how people in the metropolis perceive TVET as an option for second cycle education.

Research Method

This study started with a preliminary literature review to conceive and birth the research topic. It was deduced from the literature review that, stigmatization of TVET may not be a fallacy in Ghana but what was lacking in literature was how people perceive TVET in Ghana. So, the research question was set to address this gap through a survey supported by qualitative data for triangulation purpose.

The case study method was adopted for taking a snapshot of people's perceptions of TVET. In so doing this study considered the cultural and social fabric of the study setting more because the study is premised on an epistemological and ontological belief that knowledge is influenced by people's experiences. The case was selected not because it is representative of other cases but because of the setting's uniqueness in terms of population, the popularity of the TVET institution, and even its hospitality to the inquiry.

By a qualitative method, this research sought to validate the survey and to better understand the perception people have about TVET education in the study area. To acquire rich empirical data for the analysis, observations, interviews, surveys with open-ended questions and perception items were used. Even so, probes to the open-ended questions were specific to the respondent's comment for example, "Can you give more details about that?"

In this research, the population included all final year students and their parents in selected schools in the Kumasi Metropolis as well as final year students of TVET institutions. However, the sample frame purposively included third-year students in the BenStel school system (a private school) and Awere Basic School (a public school) and their parents in the Kumasi Metropolis as well as final year students in the Kumasi Technical Institute; a well-known TVET institution in the metropolis. The selected basic schools are within the environs of the Kumasi Technical Institute and this decision was motivated by the ontological belief that people's realities are fashioned by their lived experiences and their environment thus it is also believed that people who are closer to the TVET institution could better share their perceptions about it. Besides, the third-year students were chosen since they

usually make decisions on progressing in their education and are likely to make choices based on perceptions and things happening around them. Parents play an important role in their wards school selection therefore their perceptions and experiences can influence the choice of TVET (Hegna and Smette 2017; Liz and Qiu, 2018). The final year students of the Kumasi Technical Institute were included because the assumption was that, they had perceptions about the institution. Assessing the general perception on TVET was also important to know the views of those who had gone through the TVET system to confirm or refute the claims and perceptions they had before enrolling in the school. The governing educational institution (Metropolitan Education Directorate) for the metropolitan was also sampled for data on how perceptions have affected TVET development.

With 1508, 120, 30 population for Kumasi Technical Institute, BenStel and Awere respectively, the sample size was derived as 306, 91, 28 for the respective schools using Daniel's formula (Daniel, 1999). That is shown below and calculated in appendix one below;

$$n = \frac{NZ^2p(1-p)}{Nd^2+Z^2P(1-p)}$$

Where: n= sample size; N= study population/ number of final year students in the study area; Z= the value of the normal variable/ no. of standard deviation units corresponding to confidence level (1.96) for a confidence level of 95%, p= the highest possible proportion (0.5); and d= the margin of error (0.05).

Even with this sample size, purposive and accidental sampling was used to select participants who were available and willing to respond to the open-ended questionnaire. These students were also followed up to interview their parents to gather data on the parents' perceptions on TVET. The qualitative data collected were analyzed together with the quantitative data. The qualitative data collected were analyzed and presented in themes. Since the data was textual (qualitative), it was closely examined to identify the common or repeated themes, topics, ideas and patterns.

This study followed Braun and Clarke's (2008) six-step process (familiarization, coding, and generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing up) of conducting a thematic analysis. Even so, since an inductive approach was used, the data was allowed to expose the themes rather than developing preconceived themes. In that, a latent approach was adopted by reading and arranging data into subtext. However simple statistical charts and diagrams were used to project the few quantified data. Simple statistical charts and diagrams were used to project the quantified data while qualitative data were presented as in-text quotations.

RESULTS

Table 1. Basic Characteristics of respondents (Source: Field data Collection, November 2021)

Gender of Parents					
	Male		Female		
	Freq.	&	Freq.	%	Total Freq.
	56	70	24	30	80
Gender of TVET Students					
	Male		Female		
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
	180	90	20	10	200
Ages of TVET Students					
Age	Freq.	%	Mean	Mean deviation	Total Freq.
15-19	69	35	20.55	2.4495	200
20-24	120	60			
25+	11	5			
Ages of BECE Candidates					
Age	Freq.	%	Mean	Mean deviation	Total Freq.
13	5	5	15.2	0.930342	103
14	23	22			
15	36	35			
16	30	29			
18	9	9			

Parents and BECE Candidates perception of TVET in the Study Area

Parents play a key role in the choice of school and programme their children pursue as they advance academically. For instance, the survey revealed that parents prioritize and dedicate time towards seeing to it that their wards attend prestigious Senior High Schools and read programmes that would give them white-collar jobs upon completion.

The qualitative response gathered from the interview in sum was that, even when TVET graduates find jobs, they are referred to as technicians because their job is more manual, so they do not receive competitive salaries in comparison with counterparts who pursue tertiary education (intellectual job) in the same field. For example, mechanical engineer compared to technical engineer. A parent commented that:

…… *"I'm particular about the school my child attends. I would rather have him attend PRESEC Legon. I want him to get good classmates and also read science so that he would become a doctor in the future. That is what I want for my child" ……*

The perception question on whether an excellent grade is required for enrolling in TVET revealed that most parents (74% of 80parents) either strongly disagreed or disagreed that an

excellent grade is a requirement at the TVET institution. See Figure 4.1a. Parents who agreed that a student needs an excellent grade to read a TVET programmme related their reasons to some top-ranked secondary-technical schools in the country they know to pick only high scoring students.

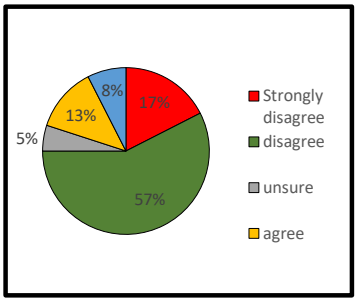

Fig 1: An Excellent grade as a requirement for TVET

Source: Field data, November 2021

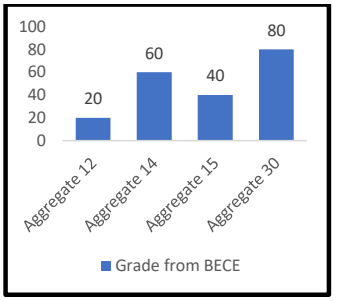

Fig 2: TVET students' grade

Source: Field data, November 2021

The secondary-technical schools are often the mainstream senior high schools that have additional courses such as building technology, woodwork, or applied electricity attached to the regular courses for students who opt for the technical aspect. Parents who had formed strong opinions about TVET were convinced that TVET is for weak students. The claim that weak students often attend TVET institutions again was not entirely false because the study revealed that about 40% of the respondents from the TVET institution under study enrolled with an aggregate 30 as evidenced in Figure 2. Considering that the BECE grading system picks three core subjects (English language, Mathematics and Science) and three other best three subjects, the students probably had weak passes in the subjects selected for grading.

Also, with a mean age of 21 years and a mean deviation of 2.4, it may suffice to say that the TVET students interviewed had repeated classes whilst in basic school. Given that the minimum age for completing junior high school is 15 years, their ages suggested that the TVET students might have enrolled in the secondary level at age 19 years or above; confirming that they were weak students, did not start school early, or did not receive support to further their education.

The study did not show an association between TVET enrolment and the economic status of families. However, from the parents' perspective, TVET courses were not for students from poor families (85% of 80 parents said so). Since the likes of Tripney *et al*., (2013), have purported a link between TVET and employment it may be expected that poor families may want their wards to attend a TVET institution to be employed after school. However, it appears parents believe that mainstream education offers their wards better employment opportunities than TVET does. According to some parents (45 out of 80 respondents) who shared additional information on why TVET was not an option for poor families, parents may spend more on their wards in TVET because they need to buy tools for practical work which come with an extra cost besides the regular tuition cost.

BECE candidates were also of the view that attending a TVET institution will restrict their academic achievement because they would not progress to higher levels of education.

So, about 85 out of 91 candidates and 18 out of 28 candidates for Benstil and Awere schools respectively stated they will not choose a TVET institution as the first choice of secondary education. Further information from these same candidates also showed that they preferred white- collared jobs or 'office jobs' such as medical doctors, journalists, pilots, nurses, lecturers, accountants, secretaries, lawyers, engineers, etc. and not TVET institutions which provided training and careers that required developing manual skills such as artisanry, craftmanship, catering, technicians, fitters, welders, carpenters, and masons. Therefore, candidates would select second cycle or Senior High Schools (SHS) which pursued programmes such as General Science (Chemistry, Physics and Biology), Business (Economics, Business Management, Financial Accounting/Costing), or General Arts (Literature, Religious Studies, Government) which provided training and career paths suited to white-collar jobs.

It was only a few candidates (16 out of the total 119) who mentioned that, they would select TVET institutions as their first-choice schools. A student is for instance quoted saying

"I want to learn much about vocational training".

Another candidate in a public JHS said *"I want to learn about creating jobs for myself even if am not able to pursue school to the highest level".*

These reasons stated confirm that students select second-cycle schools to develop career paths with a majority having a preference for grammar schools other than TVET institutions.

Sources of the Parents and Students' Perception about TVET

The study revealed that societal influence is the main source of the perception people have of TVET. Nonetheless, parents are the lead influencer of the perception issue. Parents can project their views on the children in terms of making choices about their education and children usually comply. Teachers are also influential in creating perceptions about TVET. Parents who are not so educated may fall on teachers' advice when making decisions about their academics. Here again, the teachers' perception is projected onto the students and their parents.

According to the students interviewed the decision on which second cycle institution to attend largely depends on their parents. A student stated:

"The choice of school to attend doesn't depend on me, my parents are the ones who make those decisions for me."

Even though the comments made by the student do not hold for all the students, however in typical Ghanaian settings parents primarily make such decisions for their wards. From the interviews, more students (21 out of 28) in the public school, Awere Junior High, receive support and encouragement to attend TVET institutions. According to students at Awere, the support mainly comes from their teachers who often suggest TVET based on one's performance in school. A student noted that:

"I want to become an electrician but I am not academically good so my teacher has suggested that I go to KTI and read electrical engineering technology, he said there, I will not offer physics which is difficult."

In contrast only 6 students from Benstel mentioned they had encouragement implying 85 of them received no encouragement at all. One of these students stated that:

"Our teachers encourage us to choose good schools but they have not mentioned any TVET institution as a top school in Ghana".

Other students interviewed made similar comments about how the statements made

parents, teachers and people around them make them consider TVET as an option. This implies that, if the perception of TVET is to be changed the target should be the society. Though not a one-size-fits-all kind of approach, interventions should consider all groups in the society.

The products from TVET institutions also influence the perception people have about TVET. Unlike the grammar schools where students come out with modest demeanour, parents argued that TVET students exhibit deviant behaviour. Again, parents and students perceive that apart from not landing on white-collar jobs, TVET students are also unable to achieve higher heights in academics like those in grammar school do. According to the parents as shown in Figure 3, TVET students are often rowdy, seen in fights and bullying, thus, they do not have a good public image. Besides, TVET students according to parents do not land reputable jobs. With an emphasis on how influential parents are in making decisions about their ward's academics, the narrative implies that parents who have such perception would not want their wards to attend TVET institutions.

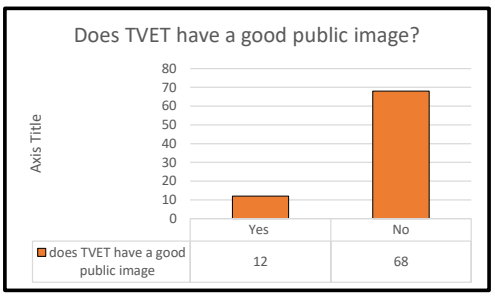

Fig 3: TVET's Public Image Source: Field data, November 2021

DISCUSSIONS

Misconception

Arising from the perception that TVET is for academically weak students and the thought that students who enroll in TVET cannot reach high academic heights as their counterparts in the grammar schools, the share of secondary school children enrolled in TVET programmes remained at 11 percent from 1999 to 2017 (Akyeampong, 2017). The low rates of individual application to TVET learning opportunities also led to what The Council For Technical And Vocational Education And Training (COTVET) (2014) exposed as a stagnation of TVET enrollment from 2002 to 2006. This study hints a similar scenario as at 2021.

Thus, the present public perception about TVET has led to a vicious cycle of poor perception of TVET. As generations continue to see TVET in a bad lens it is eventually becoming a dumpsite for weak students as has been perceived and this will lead to low development in the TVET sector.

Skill-based Training

A UNESCO publication by Marope *et al*., (2015), reveals that TVET plays a major role in curbing idleness in the young population. This claim is a result of the outcomes TVET has brought forth in many developed countries as far as employment is concerned. TVET is proven to be success catalyst for poverty alleviation, peace promotion, environmental conservation and sustainable development. Seng (2012), argues TVET is the master key for economic development such that TVET graduates with higher-order skills can open up businesses to employ those with lower-order skills. In that, Marope *et al*., (2015), opine that those skills gained from TVET attract foreign direct investment influx. This virtuous cycle is what is needed to address youth unemployment. Others (Law, 2012; Maclean & Wilson, 1933; Pambudi & Harjanto, 2019), also argue that the TVET contributes significantly towards building a strong human capital required for productivity, growth, and wealth creation. Marope *et al*., (2015), share

a diverging view that TVET also empowers other human development factors like literacy, numeracy, health, nutrition and improves the quality of life of people and society. That is to say, TVET promises an all-inclusive human development and helps achieve social equity aside from aiding in economic development (Baraki & Kemenade 2013).

As far as this study is concerned there are some prospects for TVET to contribute to solving the unemployment problem in Ghana because parents agree that TVET forms an important component of the school system because it affords students trainees skill set unlike their counterparts in the grammar schools who acquire knowledge for further studies.

Societal Influence

Studies (Comer & Haynes 1991; Grolnick & Ryan 1989; Haley-Lock and Posey-Maddox 2016; Hegna and Smette), show that parents play a significant role in educational decision making of students. Thus, if they have a demeaning perception on a form of education, they are unlikely to allow their wards tow that line of education. Law (2012), argues that the buffer for Singapore's massive economic development is a result of their ability to put TVET in perspective when making economic development policies. That is to say, for TVET to become successful in economic development, policies should consciously integrate TVET as a tool for development (Boateng, 2012). Another distinguished strategy the aided the success of Singapore's TVET was the government's ability to shift public perception through a well-structured institute that sought to regenerate and transform TVET institutions on regional colleges. A facet of the strategy was to change the minimum years of education to ten years as it was felt that a primary school education was no longer sufficient for those who were to pursue vocational skills.

Thus, arguably, elevating the status of TVET in terms of selection criteria and credential to be awarded not only alter perceptions but could lead to economic development as in the case of Singapore. In order to tackle the societal perception that TVET is not a dead-end, the best practices of countries like Singapore, Republic of Korea and Czech Republic could provide lessons for TVET development in Ghana – not to wholesale their strategies but to contextualize and adopt when necessary.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis from the data gathered for the study revealed that parents perceive TVET to be for weak students. 74% of parents agreed that the required grade (cut-off point) for TVET enrolment is low. Moreover, the average grade of the TVET students who responded to the questionnaire supported the parents' opinion. Since parents perceive TVET to be for weak students, it is very likely they would not support a ward who has an excellent grade and has interest for TVET programmes.

A majority, 93% and 65% of students from both schools (Benstel School System and Awere Basic School respectively) stated a decision not to pick a TVET institution as a first choice of second cycle education because they believe that there are less opportunities in TVET to achieve higher academic heights. Where in reality, TVET has a longer academic pathway unlike the grammar school. This perception of low educational opportunities can demoralize students who have interest in TVET but want to stay in academia. Again, this perception can hinder those in TVET from pursuing high academic achievements even when opportunities are available.

Though studies have numbered a wide range of benefits of TVET yet with the existing poor perception about TVET in Ghana, governments will continue to invest without reaping the desired benefits. In other to harness the full potentials of TVET – which is propelling industrialization and creating employment,

retooling of the TVET sector which includes a curriculum revision and synchronizing TVET and tertiary education would be beneficial.

This could imply that, the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET) would revise the TVET curriculum to include physics and elective mathematics in programmes like electrical engineering technology, automobile engineering, architectural drafting, electrical machine rewinding, electronic principles. This will help students who want to further their education at the tertiary level match up with those from the grammar school schools. Again, if such subjects are included it will reduce the perception that TVET is for weak students because those subjects are seen as difficult and for smart students.

To address the issue of perception people develop due to the output TVET produces, there should be a further curriculum revision for training to be contemporary industry standard so that TVET graduates who do not wish to further their education can still fit in the industry. If TVET institutions can meet industry demands it will encourage the government to invest more into TVET development.

Again, TVET institutions should be regulated by the COTVET to keep a class size of a maximum of 25 students. This is because, with a smaller class size, teachers will be able to facilitate practical sessions effectively with students fully participating in order to master the skills. Again, a smaller class size will help maintain a good classroom climate for effective teaching and learning. Further research could consider the challenges of linking second cycle TVET to non-technical/mainstream tertiary education in Ghana.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflicting interests in this study.

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