

## Skill Acquisition (TVET) and Entrepreneurship

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### Abstract

This paper explores Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a promoter of entrepreneurship prospects – emphasizing the significance of TVET as an entrepreneurship skills facilitator, promoting individuals' ultimate aspirations of improving their socioeconomic living conditions and general development. This paper focused on ETAHT TVET programmes – designed explicitly for returnee migrants as a case study. Applying a qualitative research method approach – this paper collected and analyzed primary and secondary data from research participants and key informants. This paper asserts that contemporary TVET programmes play a significant role in equipping individuals with both TVET and entrepreneurship skills required for productive usage and commercial gains by an entrepreneur, thus facilitating individuals' (entrepreneurs') development and economic growth.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Skill Acquisition, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

### Introduction

Since independence, Nigeria has established different skills acquisition (TVET) schemes, aimed at equipping Nigerians – especially its youth population with relevant skill competencies. Donli (2004) asserts that the need for self-reliance programmes like TVET was necessitated by the urge to ensure citizens' survival in Nigeria -- thus the main driver of the creation and spread of skill acquisition initiatives. An example is the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), established to boost employability and reduce unemployment – through its' 76 skills acquisition centres nationwide. According to Ngige (2016), "*vocational skill acquisition programmes will be utilized for job creation.*" The NDE programmes were solely successful as a booster of employability and not entrepreneurship, thus recording minimal success (Osibanje, 2006 cited in Okafor, 2019).

Therefore, in an effort to address unemployment, this study explores the current TVET strategy which simultaneously equips participants with entrepreneurial skills – considered an alternative approach of addressing unemployment; especially in the 21st-century societies

where macro and micro (entrepreneurial) economic elements contribute to the formation of new knowledge, creativity, job formation as well as the economic expansion (Chabongwa, 2018). Furthermore, TVET programmes are recognized scheme that has facilitated skills development; thus, enhancing the entrepreneurship prowess of participants in different TVET related industries that covers; agriculture, business and commerce, engineering and technology, health and paramedical, home science, humanities, education, business skills, and others (Okolie and Asfa, 2017).

Authors view TVET as a strategy to alleviate Nigeria's astronomical increase in unemployment (Okafor, 2019). Especially as in recent years Nigeria's unemployment rate increased from 27.1% in the second quarter of 2020 to 45.5% in the fourth quarter (Q4), 2021 (National Bureau of Statistics NBS, 2018, 2021). The numbers from NBS on Nigeria's rising unemployment rate indicate how poor Nigeria is. According to World Poverty Clock (WPC), 43% of Nigeria's population, or 90 million Nigerians, are "living in extreme poverty," which is considered less than \$1.90 a day, below the internationally recognized poverty threshold (2021).

Nigeria's rising unemployment and poverty statistics are alarming, thus impeding the development and economic growth of Nigerians and the nation in general. Consequently, writers view that equipping individuals with TVET – facilitates their entrepreneurial capabilities, commercial productive engagements, and subsequently mitigating unemployment through self-employment/entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, in search of further understanding, this paper poses the following question.

### **Research Question**

How does TVET facilitate entrepreneurship?

### **Research Objective**

To understand how TVET facilitates entrepreneurship

### **Literature Review**

There are numerous academic works on skills acquisition (TVET); however, focusing on TVET knowledge that covers the context of this study – entrepreneur, is this paper's scope.

Nwogu et al (2017), opine that TVET is a process of technical and vocational education that equips people with the skills they need to become craftsmen, technicians, and other skilled professionals for resourceful, independent, and/or commercial purposes. Similar to this, Donli (2004) defines skill acquisition (TVET) as the demonstration of ideas and knowledge through education that aims to instil in people the entrepreneurial spirit required for substantial progress.

According to Usman and Tasmin (2015), TVET plays important role in shaping nations' intellectual human capital – especially in today's world, where TVET has been noted to facilitate the transformations and fulfillment of skillful productivity in technical and vocational industries; thus increasing competitiveness, development and economic growth among enterprises. In the views of Amadi (2016), TVET know-how is crucial to entrepreneurship as it is the "cornerstone" that facilitates sustainable technological development and socio-economic growth (see, Agwi, et. al., 2018; Diandra and Azmy, 2020). In a sense, the acquisition of TVET bolsters entrepreneurship skills, thus aiding development and economic growth.

Buttressing further, Umunadi (2014) postulated that the incorporation of business (entrepreneurial) skills into the curriculum of most TVET programmes has facilitated entrepreneurship knowledge, self-reliance, and success of the majority of the technical and vocational education trained entrepreneurs. This is evident, as entrepreneurship is noted to have played pivotal roles in the macro and microeconomic elements in societies (Chabongwa, 2018). The aforementioned assertion re-echoes Osemeke's (2012) viewpoint, which states that the incorporation of entrepreneurial skills curricula in most TVET programmes – helped to equip and strengthen participants with relevant skills and understanding of business practices and operations respectively.

In Nigeria, the linkage of TVET and entrepreneurship became evident in the 21st century, and as mentioned earlier; most TVET programmes are currently structured to equip and expose individuals with relevant TVET cum entrepreneurship skills training – seen as a new dimension with comprehensive processes that engages individuals with actual TVET skills acquisition and subsequent income-generating business (entrepreneur) techniques (Alhasan and Abdullahi, 2013).

In the 21st century, TVET programmes have trained many technological innovators – who became start-up entrepreneurs; this is because, entrepreneurship pursuant is currently the goal of the majority of the TVET programmes (Abubakar, et. al., 2020). The above assertion is confirmed by the recent work of Ohagwu, et. al (2021) which asserts that TVET is a recognized skills training process that equips people with practical knowledge and skills that can be used effectively in the workplace, especially in commercial enterprises.

In a bid to address the growing unemployment in Nigeria, the federal and states government recognizes the importance of developing entrepreneurial skills, thus introducing “*entrepreneurial skills*” into the basic level of education, and including TVET centres (FRN, 2004 cited in Mbanefo and Eboka, 2017). As rightly posited by Salleh (2015), the essence of TVET is to facilitate and or enhance the chances of entrepreneurship and create jobs in technical and vocational industries – ultimately leading to the development and economic empowerment of TVET graduates (also see; Mawan, 2015, cited in Ohagwu, et. al., 2021).

Hence, the adoption of TVET by both government and non-governmental organization is a realization that it is an approach that boosts entrepreneurship through individuals' creative engagements in productive enterprises and job creation, thus bolstering national development and economic growth (Mbanefo and Eboka, 2017). Further, Sovacool and Bulan, (2011) postulate that TVET as a process equips and or sharpens individuals' technical know-how; to which productive usage of the skills generates revenues, thus facilitating individuals' economic and developmental growth. The aforementioned assertion has been postulated by different skill acquisition (TVET) targeted economic development theorists.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

There are different theories on national development and economic growth, however, this study is focused on TVET inspired economic development theoretical frameworks, namely Keiffer's theory and Dreyfus's skill acquisition model

#### **The Dreyfus Model of Skill Acquisition**

According to the Dreyfus model (Dreyfus, 2004), one progresses through five degrees of proficiency as one acquires and develops a skill: 1) Novice 2) Advanced beginner 3) Competent 4) Proficient 5) Expert.

Dreyfus's model of skill acquisition explained that for an individual to attain expertise level in a specific skill-set; he/she must start from the "novice" level until the end, "expert" stage before being recognized as someone that possesses transformative change capabilities.

### **Keiffer's Theory of Empowerment In Relation to Tvet**

Keiffer's (1984) theory applies to individuals in the process of empowerment; postulating that individual passes through several stages in the TVET programmes before being certified competent in specific skill-set, thus considered empowered; which if financially supported to start-up, possess the potentials of an entrepreneur. Although with different words (Essay, UK, 2013).

The overall goal of Keiffer's empowerment theory was for individuals, groups, or communities to achieve positive proximal (direct/personal) outcomes and distal (indirect/public) outcomes; which are mostly achievable when individuals' are productively engaged in an income-generating enterprise (entrepreneurship). Explaining further, an adaptation of Keiffer's theory cited in the work of Ohagwu (2020), listed and gave details of the different stages and benefits of TVET programmes to participants. His work reiterated that the ultimate goals of TVET are to serve as a pathway towards the socio-economic improvement of individuals and society in general (2020).

It should be noted that while most writers consider TVET as an approach that facilitates job creation opportunities; however, few writers critiqued TVET – questioning the efficacies and operational framework of some TVET programmes, particularly in developing nations (i.e., Nigeria) to equip participants with TVET cum entrepreneurial skills. In Oshionebo (2017) criticism, he argued that TVET programmes in Nigeria are riddled with corruption and finance mismanagement, which has resulted in the inefficiency of most TVET programmes in Nigeria. In addition, Marope et al (2015) assert that the direction and level of educational policy have a substantial impact on TVET. They make the case that TVET operational systems are costly, occasionally ineffective, and unresponsive (2015). Other critics argued the lack of public knowledge on TVET – necessitates the "lack of participation in technical and vocational stream" – hence, impedes people's chances of acquiring TVET cum entrepreneurship skills (Ismail and Razali, 2013).

Furthermore, Ismail and Abiddin (2014) noted that the lack of public knowledge is due to the mindset and public perception of TVET as a second-class education stream. Furthermore, Omar, et. al (2020) cited in Yeap, et. al (2021) maintains that TVET still faces the challenges of second-class education "mindset," which significantly contributes to low TVET students' enrolment – as low enrolment can be traced to "lack of student motivation and career counseling, stigma towards TVET graduates, government passive attitude towards TVET and inadequacies of infrastructure resources." Amedorme and Fiagbe (2013), referenced in Ohagwu (2020), highlighted TVET operational issues including limited technical institutes, resources, and insufficient technical instructors to train students.

Although faced with challenges, the importance of TVET cannot be overemphasized as it has positively impacted individuals' human capacity development and economic growth. According to the National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) cited in Maigida, et. al (2013), the acquisition of TVET has facilitated creativity and led to an improvement in skills competencies required in the workplace, thus creating more skilled manpower – considered the basis for development in the technological and vocational industries, thus boosting economic growth (Diandra and Azmy, 2020; Agwi, et. al., 2018). The

expertise in skills acquired through TVET has produced several successful entrepreneurs, who are now economically self-sufficient (Maigida, et. al., 2013).

Also, the recognition of TVET programmes as a key job creation avenue, that facilitates the development and economic growth – has intensified public awareness and knowledge on the benefits of the acquisition of TVET, resulting in increased enrolment into TVET programmes. For instance, within the context of this study, the intensified public awareness of the benefits of TVET, led to the enrolment of over 1500 Edo state's returnee migrants into TVET programmes – from August 2017 to January 2020 (ETAHT, 2020); this number excludes enrolment from non-returnee migrants within and outside the state. In furtherance, TVET programmes boost entrepreneurship skills, as the data gathered from this study recorded over 80 percent of the research participants alluding that they became entrepreneurs through ETAHT TVET programmes (see, Table 4.1).

It is pertinent to stress that in an effort to develop a sustainable, climate-resilient economy and financially stable young population; the Nigerian government's collaboration with "agribusiness" loan financing organizations – targeting young Nigerians yielded profits in agribusiness; thus bolstering economic growth (International Fund for Agricultural Development IFAD, 2021). Supporting agribusiness, considered part of the TVET programme, consisting of – "Crop Production, Livestock, Forestry, and Fishing," played a major part in Nigeria's current economic growth (National Bureau of Statistic NBS, 2022). NBS notes that in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2021; Nigeria's economy recorded a growth rate with agribusiness being a significant contributor to the growth; the NBS report asserts that agriculture bolstered the economic growth by 3.58% (2022). The report further postulates that "the fourth quarter growth indicates a steady economic recovery accounting for annual growth of 3.40% in 2021" (ibid). Thus, making TVET a significant contributor to national economic growth.

### **Research Methods**

A rigorous technique was used to gather high-quality data in an effort to empirically explore contemporary TVET programmes and determine how it has aided participants' entrepreneurial status. As a result, interviews served as the primary method of data collection for this study, which followed the qualitative research methodology. The researchers had the chance to conduct in-depth interviews utilizing open-ended questioning and answering strategies courtesy of the qualitative research methodology. The use of open-ended in-depth interview techniques allows the researcher to obtain detailed responses (data) to a wide range of unstructured questions from the research subjects during an interactive interview session.

*The interview technique serves as justification for the use of the qualitative research method (interview), as it allows for the researcher and research participants to have open, engaging, and social dialogues while also using its methodologies to provide a more comprehensive picture of situations (Nicholls, 2011; Cheung, et. al., 2016). Additionally, the qualitative research approach helped with the collection of raw primary data on the topic under study. This is significant since gathering raw first-hand information (primary data) enhances the originality of studies. Consequently, this study chose the qualitative research approach because it was the most suited one for achieving uniqueness. Sapsford and Jupp (2006) assert that raw data (primary data) is the best type of material evidence for proving the originality of research, especially when using a qualitative research method.*



In addition, this paper made use of secondary data. The usage of qualitative research method data collection technique provided an opportunity for the researcher to gather secondary data (statistics on the number of enrolment to ETAHT TVET programmes, types of skills programmes, and publications on ETAHT TVET programmes operational framework) – deemed useful to the objectives of this study; consequently facilitating a robust data analysis. In order to obtain evidence that correlates with, or supports, other findings (such as primary data, etc.), secondary data gathering methodology was utilized — hence, facilitating logical analysis and discussions in this research paper. supporting the usage of secondary data, Boslaugh (2007) notes that secondary data is useful in qualitative research method because it gives the researcher already gathered statistical data that helps, corroborates, and/or correlates primary data - thus leading to an authenticated, clear, and comprehensive data representations and analysis, respectively (Ajayi, 2017).

Additionally, qualitative research is thought to be a better approach for studying issues in the social sciences and humanities because, writers stated that, it offers the chance for an in-depth interview through exploratory open-ended research questions (Ohagwu et al., 2022). The researcher employed non-probability and snowball sampling approaches, which were used to find research participants who fit the study's research population criteria. The usage of non-probability and snowball sampling techniques; enabled the researcher to gather data through in-depth interview sessions, focus group discussion (FGD), and personal observation of 30 research participants (25 face-face interviews and 5 members' Focus Group Discussion). The following explanations explain why non-probability and snowball sampling techniques were chosen: 1) the lack of proper centralized documentation of TVET graduates in Edo state, coupled with the inaccuracy of the number of TVET graduates (returnee migrants) in the state due to the large number of government and non-governmental TVET programmes spread across various local government areas (LGA); and 2) this study was carried out in two study locations (Benin City and Ovia South-West LGA, Edo State). Therefore, snowball sampling techniques were an appropriate choice as they allowed for the sourcing of research participants through the assistance of key informants, who served as the chain-link connection to other research participants. It is important to note that as mentioned earlier, the research participants were spread across two locations (study areas), and hence, the researcher faced data collection challenges, which were ameliorated using the snowball sampling technique. The chain linkage between the key informants and the research participants makes it easy for the researcher to discover research participants who meet the criteria for the research study's sample unit, making the snowball sampling technique appropriate for this study (Trevor, 2007; Merriam, 1998, cited in Pitney and Parker, 2009). In a sense, the use of the non-probability and snowball sampling techniques (chain-link network) made it easier to gather data from only the research participants who satisfied the requirements for the sample unit in this study.

As previously stated, 30 sample sizes were non-randomly chosen from the research population, which included both male and female returnee migrants (from Libya) who had completed the ETAHT TVET programmes in Edo State, Nigeria, and had used the acquired skills for at least a year prior to the first date of data collection 21st November 2019.

Furthermore, Edo state is known as the ancient Benin Kingdom and mostly populated by the Bini tribe; nevertheless, this study understands the importance of ethnicities inclusiveness in a research study – thus had representation from other ethnicities (i.e., Igbo, and Yoruba) in the study's sample size. The researcher was able to collect perspectives from other ethnic

groups on the subject thanks in large part to the participation of a diverse range of ethnic groups. This assertion reiterates Fraser's (2018) and Van der Heijden, et al (2019) contribution, which highlights that, in accordance with research ethics, the inclusion of gender and ethnicities is essential to a research study in order to acquire a larger knowledge. This study supported the aforementioned claim, pointing out that including all genders and ethnicities in a study facilitates the collection of demographic information and unique perceptions (data) peculiar to each gender and ethnicity, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study.

In addition, the bulk of the study's participants (96.66%) are between the ages of 21 and 30 and between the ages of 31 and 40 had 33.33 percentile representation. The age range choice was to ensure that majority of the research participants' fall within Nigeria's youth categorization – between 18 to 35 years (National Youth Policy, 2009). This is in the understanding of the importance of youth population, and also recognizing that youth are the manpower of every nation; thus are the nations' builders – which when productively engaged, results in productivity and national development (Gidley and Inayatullah, 2002; Odoh and Eme, 2014; Uzochukwu, 2015). In furtherance, the above knowledge reaffirms the understanding that individuals' (youth) that are productively engaged in enterprises (entrepreneurship), results in national development and growth (Agwi, et. al., 2018; Diandra and Azmy, 2020).

Furthermore, after gathering useful first-hand (primary) data that answered this study's objective from these 30 sample sizes (25 face-to-face in-depth interviews and 5 focus group discussion (FGD) members); a saturation point was reached when the researcher started noticing repetitive responses from research participants – thus data collection was discontinued. With the experience gathered during fieldwork data collection, this paper suggests 20 to 30 research participants as an appropriate threshold to researchers' intending to make use of the qualitative research method – as an in-depth interview session with the aforementioned sample size can sufficiently answer research field questions. Hence, this study confirms the thresholds of 20 to 30 sample sizes – a saturation point, in qualitative research. Supporting this assertion, Hagaman and Wutich (2017) posit that sample sizes of 20 to 40 interviews are adequate to achieve data saturation of meta-themes, particularly when conducting qualitative research. Furthermore, Green and Thorogood (2004) cited in Vasileiou, et al (2018) postulate that

*“The experience of most qualitative researchers conducting an interview-based study with a fairly specific research question is that little new information is generated after interviewing 20.”*

Additionally, in order to perform "high-quality" academic research, it is essential to observe and put research ethics and principles into practice (Zukauskas, et al., 2018). As a result, all ethics (confidentiality, informed consent, restrictions, etc.) and principles (insider and outsider) guiding scientific research studies were observed in this study. The researcher is an outsider because he is not from Edo state. Being an outsider, however, did not hinder the effectiveness of this study; rather, it portrayed the researcher as an impartial umpire driven by research ethics and principles. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argued that being an outsider positions researchers as bystanders and impartial explorers, which reinforced the researchers' adherence to the outsider research principle of impartiality. On the other hand, the researcher might be viewed as an insider because he is from Nigeria and is familiar with

the topic, particularly since Edo state is a part of Nigeria and with the largest number of returnee migrants. Furthermore, the researcher is knowledgeable about the economic hardship and rising unemployment in Nigeria and different government and non-governmental organizations programmes positioned to address these problems; therefore, the researcher possesses insider features. However, the researcher's insider status did not interfere with the researcher's ability to follow the recognized guidelines for conducting research; rather, it allowed for robust data analysis and discussion. In support of this assertion, Fleming (2018) argues that adhering to research guiding principles prevents even a researcher with extensive insider knowledge of the subject matter from being biased. Instead, ethical consideration of the principles guiding the conduct of research is crucial for the researcher.

Continued from the previous paragraph on research ethics, this paper ensured the highest level of confidentiality by not revealing the private information of research participants (names, addresses, etc.); as a result, no field question responses (data) could be traced back to any research participant; and as this study used pseudonyms and codes when analyzing the data gathered, no research participant could be identified. Keeping in mind research ethics, this study ensured the utmost privacy and confidentiality of research participants. As a result, each research participant is only known to the researcher. The researcher then presents the research participants with coded pseudonyms (such as R1, R2, FGD1, FGD2, FGD3, etc.) in the data analysis chapter. This was done to hide the participants' identities and protect them from any potential harassment or negative consequences for granting the researcher an interview. One cannot overstate the significance of confidentiality ethics and the necessity of keeping research participants' identities confidential. Dooly et al. (2017) noted that maintaining confidentiality in a research project is essential for ensuring research participants' identities and personal information (such as name, address, etc.) are kept private.

Additionally, because the researcher for this study is fully aware of the ethical requirements for informed consent, he asked and given a consent approval letter by the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, which was presented to and read to all research participants. This was done in order to inform the research participants of the study's objective(s) and obtain their consent prior to the commencement of each interview. These pre-interview approaches were used in this study to make sure that the research participants understood the objectives of the study and some of the potential research questions before deciding whether or not to participate in the interview. The aforementioned technique is essential in research studies and to researchers, with the latter requiring a confirmatory signature from research participants to confirm their voluntary participation (Nijhawan, et al., 2013). The researcher included and abided by the principles of informed consents; as it is a key component in a research study; considered as a stamp of approval (consent) by research participants, thus validating data gathered by this study's researcher; consequently ensuring a reliable (consented) data-based analysis.

This study faced limitations due to the sampling technique used and in maintaining the transparency research ethic, this study findings cannot be used to generalize the entire Edo state population. To be specific, due to the non-random snowball sampling technique used – not all the ETAHT TVET programmes trained returnee migrants from Benin City and Ovia South-West in Edo state were evenly represented. The use of non-random (snowball) research approaches results in academic research limitations and prevents researchers from generalizing their study findings because these techniques by default limit the research



population (Atieno, 2009; Allen, 2017). With the foregoing in mind and in keeping with the research ethic of openness, this study opines that its findings cannot be used to generalize the research population.

### Findings and Discussions

This paper's findings and discussions are focused on the objective of exploring the importance of TVET and "how TVET facilitates entrepreneurship." In order to guarantee comprehensive analysis of first-hand (primary) and secondary data gathered from research participants, key informants, and literature reviews were also drawn – to critically argue, correlate, and or corroborate findings. This study's finding posits that TVET plays key roles in entrepreneurship growth in Nigeria – thus, significantly contributing to national development and economic growth. The majority of this study's research participants are of the view that the acquisition of TVET skills, played a significant role in facilitating their entrepreneurship opportunities. Therefore, the below diagram and chart show the frequency and percentile representation of this study's research participants that attained entrepreneurship status through ETAHT TVET programmes.

Table 4.1

ETAHT TVET Entrepreneurial Status. (Source: Section A, Question 8).

Entrepreneurial Status	Frequency	Percentage
Entrepreneurs	25	83.33%
Non Entrepreneurs	5	16.66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above diagram show 30 as the total number of research participants. The entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs are 25 and 5 respectively. Both the entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs are ETAHT TVET graduates (returnee migrants) who were financially supported to start up a business; however, while the entrepreneurs are still actively in business with skills acquired; non-entrepreneurs liquidated their businesses, due to insufficient funding and or mismanagement – thus are currently jobless. As clearly pointed out by Oshionebo (2017), corruption and financial mismanagement, are recognized challenges impeding the efficiencies and success of most TVET programmes and their' graduates respectively.

The researcher questioned them on the reasons behind their choice of becoming entrepreneurs, to which over 80% of the research participants opines that, becoming an entrepreneur took them off Nigeria's rising unemployment statistics. It is important to note that the majority of this study's research participants opine that Nigeria's rising unemployment led to their initial migration, which according to them, the situation (unemployment) has not changed either; thus opting to become entrepreneurs after the ETAHT TVET programmes were their perfect unemployment escape approach. According to R13 ETAHT TVET programmes trained welder stressed that there are limited job opportunities in Nigeria; quoting him – "work no dey Naija na, even the ones wey dey; hard to get" which in translation literally means; "there are no jobs in Nigeria and the ones available are limited or difficult to get." This statement reaffirms the literature and statistical submission by the National Bureau of Statistics, which postulates that Nigeria's unemployment rate keeps rising every year (National Bureau of Statistics NBS, 2018, 2021).

Furthermore, R12, note that aside from the fact that becoming an entrepreneur was the best alternative for escaping unemployment and poverty; he also mentioned that *“becoming an entrepreneur, made me an independent creative thinker.”* R12 viewpoint aligns with Diandra and Azmy’s (2020) assertion that entrepreneurship is a natural phenomenon in business – driven by personal vision, passion, and or creative skills; which entrepreneurs utilize in the operation of enterprises that renders innovative commercial services, with the chances of profit or loss (Glancey and McQuaid, 2000; Moemeke, 2013).

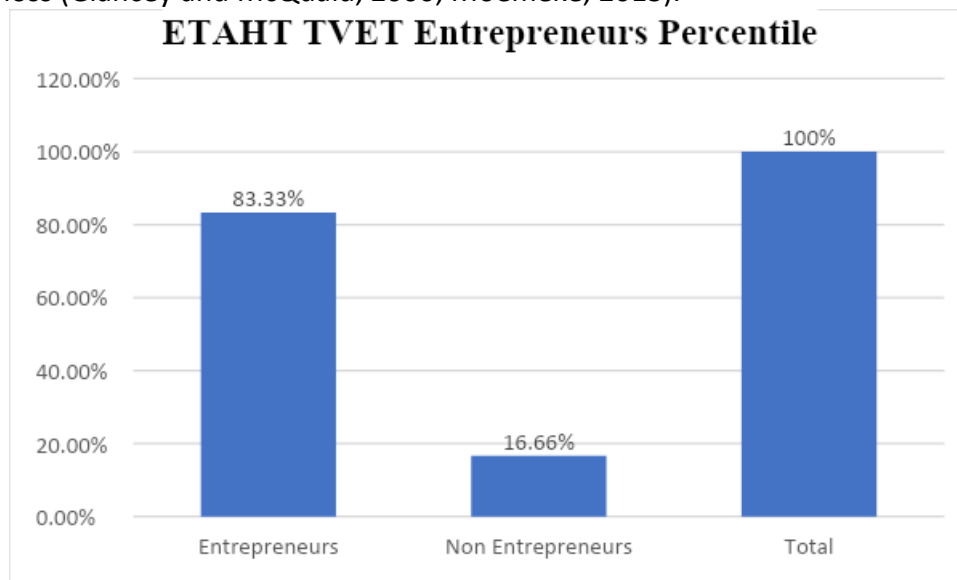


Figure 4.1 ETAHT TVET Entrepreneurs Percentile (Source: Section A, Question 8).

The majority of this paper’s study research participants (returnee migrants) opined that the ETAHT TVET programmes facilitated their entrepreneurship status. With the TVET and business skills acquired through ETAHT TVET programmes; most of this study’s research participants affirmed that TVET facilitated their current status as entrepreneurs. According to the chart representation above (Figure 3.1), 83.33% and 16.66% of the study’s research participants became entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs respectively. This paper, therefore using research participants’ submission, seeks to understand and analyse the rationale behind TVET programmes becoming a key facilitator of entrepreneurship, especially as 83.33% of this study’s research participants stressed that they became entrepreneurs after graduating from the ETAHT TVET programmes.

As seen in the chart above, the majority of this study’s research participants became successful entrepreneurs through ETAHT TVET programmes, however, most of them also complained about inadequate funding, operational equipment, and chemical thus hindering optimum productivity – According to R11,

*“I learned a lot from the ETAHT skill acquisition programme, and the things I learned have impacted greatly to my everyday living, but I think they (ETAHT and IOM) should make proper arrangements to financially support trainee (returnee migrants), also provide more equipment and chemicals needed for training.”*

Although confronted with different business challenges, the majority of the research participants (entrepreneurs) agreed that ETAHT TVET programmes played a pivotal role in their current entrepreneur status. R9 noted that the skills he acquired (Agro business management) and subsequent start-up funds helped him to become an entrepreneur and a

self-reliant individual, who is now able to support his family and people around him to the best of his abilities. Within the context of agriculture, this study is of the view, that Nigeria's federal and states government collaborations with non-governmental organizations (i.e., IOM, IFAD, etc.) to financially support TVET graduates to start-up businesses; particularly, "agribusiness" – played a significant impact in their current entrepreneurship status, thus contributing to a boost in their socioeconomic status and the overall economic growth of a nation. The above assertion is supported by the current National Bureau of Statistics NBS, (2022) report on economic growth and sectors performance in Nigeria, which postulate that in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2021 – agriculture ("*Crop Production, Livestock, Forestry, and Fishing*") contributed 3.58% to the economic growth of Nigeria. This development indicates that agriculture, a component of the contemporary TVET programmes facilitates entrepreneurship status, and also bolsters economic growth.

In addition, the entrepreneurship opportunities created by the Edo state government through ETAHT TVET programmes significantly changed the lives of the majority of its participants. According to R12, an ETAHT TVET programme trained male hair barber who is single said a lot has changed in his life since he came back from Libya and got trained through the skill acquisition programme in Edo State. Interviewing R12 at his unisex salon, he expressed how poor and difficult his life was when he got repatriated to Nigeria – *'before I can barely feed but now I can feed myself, pay my shop and house rent, support my old parents'* he continues *'for me, doing all these things with the help of my skill is empowerment to me.'* With physical expressions – facial smiles and hand gestures, R12 sums up, stressing that ETAHT TVET programmes were instrumental to his current entrepreneur status. In correlation to R12's statement of past and present personal experiences, the work by Odu et al (2014) emphasized that skill acquisition (TVET) is a tool for positive change with various potentials for skill development, capacity building, and wealth creation.

The acquisition of TVET and subsequent successes of business established by ETAHT TVET graduates bolstered their economic power. R13 a married ETAHT trained welder pointed out that he is *'100 percent economically self-reliant,'* as according to him, he pays all his bills and takes care of his wife and child, asserting that *'now I can provide three square meals for my family, I take my wife and son out for leisure once every month'* which he claimed was impossible for him to do prior to his skill training and business establishment. The views of R13 reaffirms the work of Jimba (2006) whose study finding believes that the acquisition of TVET, coupled with an enterprising usage of skills acquired facilitates economic self-reliance, thus improving one's standards of living. Therefore, according to R13, the skills acquired through the ETAHT TVET programme absolutely empowered him to become an entrepreneur. This study's five Focus Group Discussion (FGD) members acknowledged that through skill acquisition (ETAHT TVET), they have flourished in their respective entrepreneurship businesses and also helped in the training of others. The viewpoints of the five FGD members are in line with the literal submission by Okolie and Asfa (2017) who noted that acquisition of skill enables people to be trained, in order to acquire the skills required in the labour market, thus, reducing unemployment and improving economic status.

Key informant three (Ki3), who works with an international non-governmental organization, IOM showed the researcher – pictures of returnee migrants, who they (IOM) have assisted in collaboration with ETAHT to establish businesses based on the skills they (returnee migrants) acquired at the various ETAHT TVET programmes in Edo State. Ki3 mentioned that IOM efforts to ensure proper rehabilitative, re-orientation and reintegration of returnee

migrants has helped greatly to support the efforts of the State government in using skill acquisition to positively impact the lives of returnee migrants. According to Ki3;

*'We (IOM) provide returnees with business skills management (BST) – this has equipped returnees with basic knowledge and skills that prepared them (returnees) for their reintegration, small business setup, and management.'*

Ki3 continued by showing photos of returnees migrants who are now artisans while saying *'these are testimonies from the beneficiaries of IOM assisted business skill programmes in Edo State.'* Ki3 believes that IOM's skill programmes in Edo State imparted skills to returnee migrants, who are mostly now entrepreneurs. Ki3's views were exactly what Alhasan and Abdullahi mentioned in their work on the relevance of skill training on returnee migrants. According to Alhasan and Abdullahi, the exposure of returnee migrants to skill acquisition programmes paves a way that enables them (returnee migrants) to become entrepreneurs, thus, generating income and enhancing their future livelihoods 2013.

Furthermore, Ki2 opined that ETAHT's organized rehabilitation, reintegration, and skill acquisition programmes had a positive impact on returnee migrants. In Ki2 words, *'through our programmes, we have helped to rehabilitate and train returnees in different skills – so far the returnees are doing well in their businesses.'* The above views were supported by Ki1 who works with NCFRMI; Ki1 chime that skill acquisition programmes in Edo State had significant positive impacts on returnee migrants; Ki1 categorical mentioned that few graduates of the skill acquisition programmes in Edo State, gave positive testimonies, hence, he has been impressed with the programme's *'very successful'* stories. Quoting Ki1

*'The (ETAHT and IOM) skill acquisition programmes have been very successful, a very good number of the returnee migrants trained were able to make their own product at the end of the training session and they have been independent economically by making good use of the skill acquired on a commercial basis.'*

Ki1's quote correlates with a previous related study by Donli (2004) who viewed skill acquisition as a platform that instills in individuals, the spirit of entrepreneurship and economic independence. K1's submission aligns with this study's theoretical framework, which was an adaptation from the fusion of the Dreyfus skill acquisition model and Keiffer's empowerment theory. In both frameworks, the ultimate goal of skill acquisition (TVET) programme is for individuals to achieve skill expertise for productive usage that facilitates the development and economic growth; whilst simultaneously addressing social problems (i.e., unemployment, poverty, and crime). Hence, drawing from literature, theoretical framework, and data from research participants, this study postulates the below conceptual framework, which represents comprehensively – how TVET facilities entrepreneurship; thus, promoting development and economic growth.

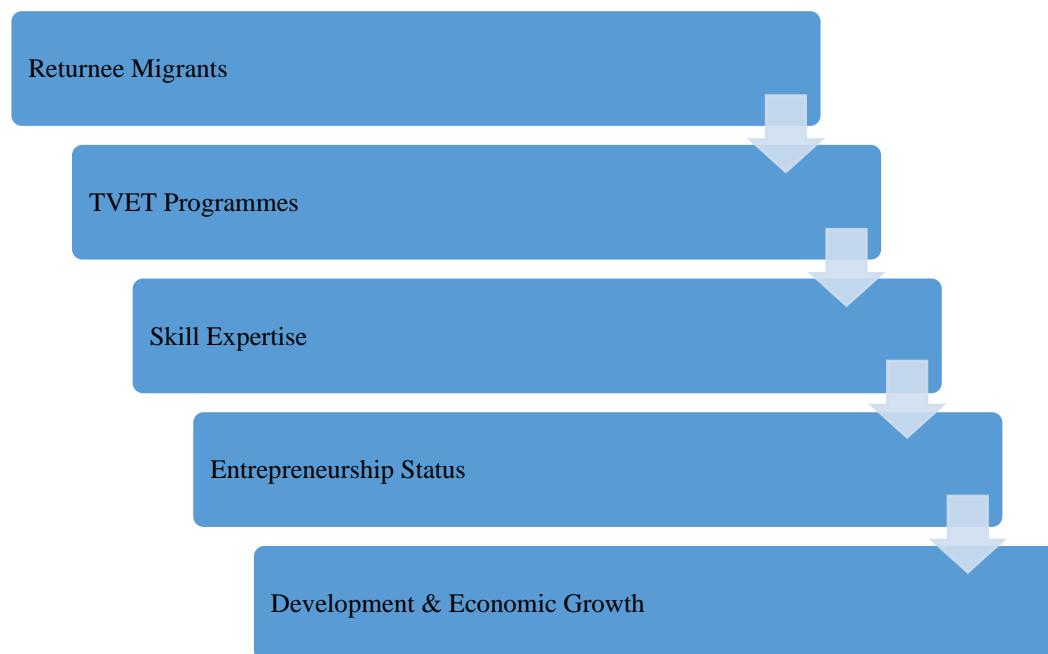


Figure 4.2 *Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) Entrepreneurship Model*  
 Explanation for the above illustrated model (figure 4.2) are as follows: “*returnee migrants*” enrolled to “*TVET programmes*,” where they were trained in different skill until they attain “*skill expertise*” needed to established business, thus boosting their “*entrepreneurship status*,” and their overall “*development and economic growth*.”

Therefore, to become productive and useful to oneself and the society in general – TVET participants had to pass through different stages in order to become empowered as entrepreneurs, with the ultimate goal of development and economic growth.

### Conclusion

Whilst, there are still a few challenges, confronting TVET programmes in Nigeria, namely; corruption and financial mismanagement, inadequate public knowledge, and awareness on the importance of TVET, and inefficient technical and operational strategies; nevertheless, this study’s finding concludes that TVET programmes (i.e., ETAHT TVET programmes) significantly facilitates the entrepreneurship status of individuals – ultimately spurring development and economic growth.

Based on finding – a large percentile of the research participants complained about insufficient funding, which significantly affected their business operation and or led to its liquidation. Therefore, for TVET graduates to become successful entrepreneurs, this paper suggests adequate funding and regular supervision of fresh TVET graduates in business.

Finally, this paper notes the importance of TVET as a facilitator of entrepreneurship; hence, assert that for individuals to become successful entrepreneurs through TVET programmes – it is pertinent that stakeholders (policymakers, government, and non-governmental organizations) lay solid foundations by way of updating and implementing up-to-date well-structured TVET programmes, which operate with an applicable framework(s).

### Policy Implications and Recommendations

This study identified knowledge gaps in previous literature, theoretical and conceptual framework, thus forming its policy implications and recommendations based on the submissions from the majority of this study’s research participants; on how TVET programmes



have facilitated the entrepreneurship status of returnee migrants in Edo State, Nigeria. Furthermore, this study notes that although previous academic works have emphasized the importance of TVET in the promotion of entrepreneurship status, there is a lack of contemporary literature, theories, and conceptual frameworks on TVET that offer approaches to sustainable entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

This study notes that as much as it is important to achieve entrepreneurship status and economic growth through skill development programmes like TVET, it is also imperative for new entrepreneurs to understand the techniques of sustaining their entrepreneur status. Therefore, this study’s contribution to academic knowledge is the techniques of attaining and sustaining entrepreneurship through TVET programmes (see Figure 4.3).

***Tvet-Entrepreneurship Model***

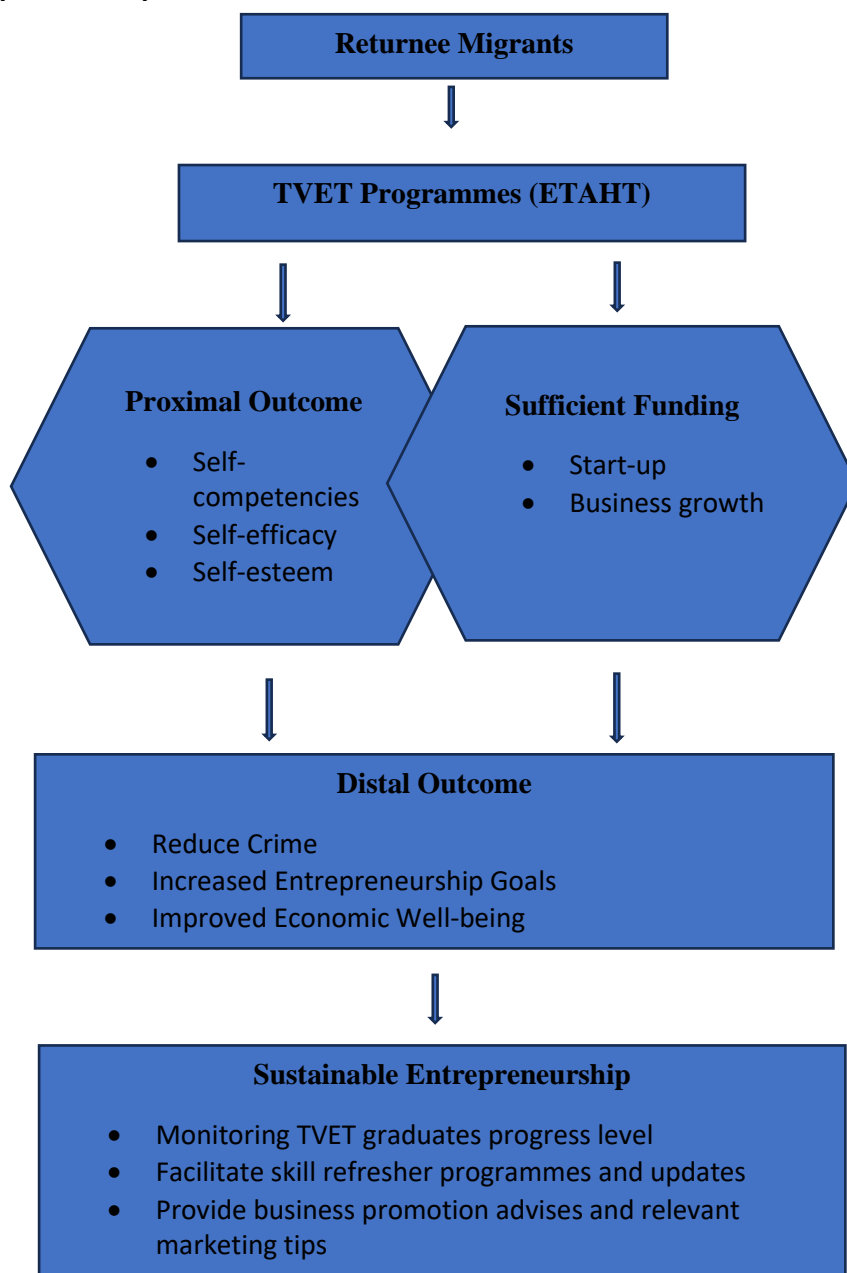


Figure 4.3: TVET Entrepreneurship Model

The practicality of the above framework can be explained as follows: “*Returnee Migrants*,” enrolls in “*TVET programmes*,” and attains skill competencies, self-efficacy, self-esteem, etc., considered “*Proximal Outcome*” – coupled with “*Sufficient Funding*,” exists *Distal Outcome*, which leads to a reduction in crime/social vices, increased entrepreneurship goals, and improved economic well-being; beneficial to TVET graduates. However, to maintain a distal outcome, there is a need to adopt a “*Sustainable Entrepreneurship*” approach as enumerated in the above diagram (1, monitoring TVET graduates' progress level, 2, facilitating skills refresher programmes and updates; 3, providing business promotion advice, and relevant marketing tips) – a win-win for stakeholders. Therefore, this study enjoins the active participation of various TVET stakeholders (government, NGOs, private corporations, etc.), for TVET participants to achieve and sustain their entrepreneurship status. Furthermore, this study postulates the following policy implications and recommendations to policymakers.

### **Awareness Creation**

For the majority of this study’s research participants, adopting a modern awareness creation technique (through; Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.) will significantly help to create TVET interest amongst the young population, and potentially increase TVET entrepreneurs. This study, therefore, urge government, NGOs, and stakeholders to adopt the TVET-Entrepreneurship framework approach as it is noted to have helped in promoting and sustaining entrepreneurship. The research recommendation on the importance of awareness creation was echoed by Okolie and Asfa (2017) as one of the challenges confronting TVET in Nigeria – Okolie, and Asfa's findings note that the lack of adequate awareness is one of the key impediments of TVET programmes in Nigeria.

### **Strengthening TVET Policies**

Nigeria’s 6-3-3-4 education system/policy is not favourable to TVET – the 6-3-3-4 educational policy focuses mainly on mainstream (secondary and university) education and relegates technical and vocational education to the background. This is evident in the government’s favouritism in the funding, research, and development of secondary and university education, as against, technical college and polytechnic education. This study recommends that the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should draft and or strengthen the existing TVET policies in Nigeria, to meet the present-day demands. This can be done, through research and development to gain current knowledge from the works of scholarly academia on TVET.

### **Sufficient Funding and Resources for Tvet Programmes**

Sufficient funding and resources are essential for well-structured and fully operational TVET programmes. A high percentage of this study’s research participants complained about financial-related challenges they experienced during the training sessions, while some noted that even after the training, they are still facing financial challenges, due to the insufficient start-up fund they received. This study noticed that the majority of TVET programmes in Nigeria are operated by NGOs and private individuals, while the Nigerian government only acts in an administrative and facilitating capacity to these TVET centres. This Nigerian government position means no or limited funding and resources from the Nigerian government. To achieve efficiency, this study hereby, recommends that the

Nigerian government should be an active player in the TVET drive in Nigeria, thus allocating sufficient funding and resources to TVET programmes.

### ***Tackling Corruption and Financial Mismanagement***

The majority of this study's research participants are in agreement that there are corruption and public finance mismanagement in Nigeria – emphasizing that corruption and public finance mismanagement leads to funding challenges, a key hindrance affecting different sections and developmental programmes in Nigeria (i.e., TVET programmes). To address these challenges, especially within the context of this study; this study recommends that TVET stakeholders should set up a monitoring, checks, and balances (audit) team on every TVET programme – to check funds inflow and ensure funds are properly disbursed, and its usage monitored, to avoid being embezzled by those in charge. To serve as a deterrence to intending offenders; this study recommends that policymakers enact laws to prosecute and stipulate severe punitive legal action against anyone found to have corrupted enriched, embezzled, or mismanaged allocated TVET funds.

### ***Monitoring The Progress of Tvet Graduates***

This study recommends post-training (graduation) monitoring (counselling, moral support, business techniques update, Marketing promotion tips, and other relevant advice) is important for the business progress and sustainability of TVET graduates (i.e., returnee migrants).

R8 suggests that '*NGO and government should monitor returnee migrants that have been trained and supported to established businesses, to know if they are making progress or not and also give advice.*' While, R12 notes that it is important to do a follow-up – suggesting that after giving the training and start-up support, the stakeholders (ETAHT and IOM) should do a follow-up to '*monitor returnees progress in their business*' or otherwise.

R12 views re-affirms Eze (1990); cited in Okolie & Asfa (2017) which emphasized the importance of a well-planned skill acquisition (TVET) initiative as an operational framework that ought to incorporate post-training monitoring/supervision of TVET graduates, thus helping to guides TVET graduates (returnee migrants) on how to effectively operate their craft businesses to achieve business success and sustainable development.

The above assertion aligns with this study's conceptual framework (TVET Entrepreneurship Model) as a comprehensive framework, hence its recommendation as an up-to-date framework for entrepreneurship-targeted TVET programmes. The TVET Entrepreneurship Model illustration, explains a well-structured TVET programme whose goal exceeds entrepreneurship, to essential approaches to sustainable entrepreneurship. This study hopes, that government, policymakers, and stakeholders, take note of the below practical framework in their decision-making processes.

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