THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN ENHANCING VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIAN POLYTECHNICS

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Abstract

Enrollment in Polytechnics for Vocational and Technical Education has decline significant in recent times as the result of misconception, that this form of education was suitable only for those who were unable to meet the standards of traditional formal schooling. In order to tackle this issue, this study was conducted to explore the role of Mass Media in enhancing Vocational Skills Development in Nigerian Polytechnics. The utilisation of various media channels to promote vocational skill development, and the challenges associated with it. The study employed a survey technique, wherein 150 students were randomly selected from three purposefully chosen polytechnics in Ogun State, South West Nigeria. The participants completed questionnaires, were collected, data were analysed using multiple regression and SPSS Version 21.0. The result revealed that an overwhelming 113 respondents (75.3%) agreed that the media significantly influences job career choices. When asked about the various media channels that can promote vocational skill acquisition, 77 respondents (51.3%) affirmed that social media platforms, while 73 respondents (48.7%) mentioned radio, and television as influential factors in their vocational skill acquisition decisions. The challenges encounter in this study included the shortage of qualified instructors, lack of funding, inadequate instructional materials, and unreliable electricity supply. Based on the study's results, it was recommended that the government and related authorities prioritize accessible funds for procuring necessary media facilities in Nigerian polytechnics for vocational skill training programs. Additionally, training and retraining of lecturers and technologists specialized in vocational educationby government to enhance the effectiveness of these programs.

Keywords: Mass Media, Vocational Education, Skill Acquisition, Technical education.

Introduction

In this context, "mass" denotes a substantial number of people or objects gathered together or forming a cohesive unit without a specific shape. Conversely, "media" pertains to the primary modes of communication, such as television, radio, and newspapers, commonly known as media (as per the Concise Oxford Dictionary, 10th Edition). The media plays a pivotal role in disseminating information and contributing to the moral, social, and intellectual growth of individuals. It serves as a platform for distributing information to a wide audience, encompassing news and statistics (Gomez, 2022).

Esteve (2018) asserts that the mass media exerts a significant impact on people's socialization, shaping their behavior through exposure to diverse ideas that can be accepted or rejected. This constant influx of information from the media can reinforce and strengthen specific mental models, making them more convincing and, consequently, impeding critical thinking. In the contemporary media landscape, the focus on education and information distribution seems to have taken a backseat to the prevalence of entertainment programs. The multitude of entertainment shows offered by various media channels unmistakably reflects their primary objectives, leading to a dramatic reduction in the time allocated to news and educational content.

According to Pusateri and Liccardi (2015), the media, along with family, religion, and peers, significantly influences public opinion, establishing its role as a vital factor in shaping societal perspectives. As a result, the media and influencer networks have emerged as influential agents of socialization, wielding substantial power over individuals. This influence can either complement, contradict, amplify, or even negate certain actions.

According to Ibeneme and Okwelle (2008), various mass media channels play a crucial role in disseminating information and creating awareness among a wide-ranging audience. These media platforms encompass radio and television broadcasts, press releases, newsletters, magazines, sponsored commercials, and the Internet. Polytechnics

can leverage these diverse media outlets to engage with both their internal and external audiences, particularly the students, in terms of vocational training and skill acquisition. Radio and television transmissions serve as potent tools for reaching out to the general public, enabling Polytechnics to showcase their remarkable technological advancements.

Technology-based vocational education and training (TVET) is an educational approach that centres on the study of technology and related disciplines, aimed at cultivating practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge necessary for various jobs in the economy and society. This form of education goes beyond the scope of general education and emphasises the development of technical expertise along with soft skills such as communication, negotiation, and teamwork.

Technology-based vocational education and training (TVET), is a fusion of vocational and technical education, both within a corporate environment and as a self-sufficient entity Okoye & Okwelle (2017) . When seen in a business context, it demands a thorough examination and seamless integration of various factors. The technical aspect encompasses tangible elements derived from applied and industrial sciences, while technology revolves around the scientific exploration and practical application of diverse fields of study. On the other hand, vocational education primarily focuses on equipping learners with essential skills and specialized training required to excel in a particular profession. As for technical education, its essence lies in providing formal instruction that empowers individuals to contribute to society through the practical application of mathematical concepts and procedures derived from applied sciences. At the same time, vocational education prepares individuals to master a specific vocation efficiently.

Technical education centers on the cultivation of pragmatic skills and competencies, whereas vocational education emphasizes the observance of established standards to ensure proficient execution within specialized fields. As asserted by FRN (2004), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) encompasses not solely general education but also the exploration of technologies and related sciences. Its primary objective is to furnish individuals with hands-on proficiencies, positive attitudes, comprehensive comprehension, and pertinent knowledge pertinent to diverse vocations within the economic and social domains.

The primary goal of education is to equip individuals with the means to attain knowledge, nurture their innate abilities, foster personal growth, and create a beneficial influence on the global community. Education holds paramount importance in advancing human development and empowerment within diverse societies. Consequently, a society without a robust educational culture and guiding principles is bound to face a decline, whereas a nation that places great importance on the advancement of its educational system is poised for remarkable achievements.

Education, whether obtained through formal means such as schools or informal methods like self-learning, is widely regarded as a lifelong pursuit. Its primary aim is to equip individuals with the necessary skills to perform a variety of tasks in the workforce. Education essentially represents a form of human capital, comprising the knowledge and abilities gained from both formal and informal learning, training, and life experiences as explained by human capital theory. Therefore, education can be considered a valuable asset or resource accessible to individuals and organizations alike. Once acquired, this human capital can be utilized to enhance employment prospects, command higher salaries, gain more authority, and explore more fulfilling career opportunities.

Statement of the Problem

The impact of various forms of media on the general public and society, particularly mass media relied upon for information, is significant. Many educators acknowledge the potential benefits of using media in education. However, not all instructors possess the necessary skills to effectively incorporate media in the classroom, leading to disruptions in the learning process. Consequently, doubts are arising regarding the efficacy of media in supporting teaching and learning activities.

The decline of Vocational and Technical Education in Polytechnics has been a slow and steady process, potentially influenced by the misconception that it is solely intended for those who cannot meet the requirements of traditional formal education. Dismissing this fallacy holds significant importance in tackling issues such as unemployment and related developmental obstacles. The objective of this study is to explore the influence of Mass Media on the acquisition of vocational skills in Polytechnics.

*Proceedings of the 4ᵗʰ International Conference, The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Nigeria
in Collaboration with Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi, Ghana
3ʳᵈ – 7ᵗʰ September, 2023. University Auditorium, Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi*

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore Mass media influences on acquisition of vocational skills.

2. To identify different media platforms that can effectively promote the acquisition of vocational skills.

3. To analyse challenges linked to utilising mass media as means to foster vocational skill acquisition.

Research Questions

1. How does Mass media influence the acquisition of vocational skills?

2. What are the media platforms that are most effective in promoting the acquisition of vocational skills?

3. What are the key challenges associated with utilising mass media to foster vocational skill acquisition?

Hypothesis

Media channels appear to have little effect on the advancement of occupational skills.

Review of Literature

Vocational Training

Vocational Education pertains to an instructional approach aimed at preparing individuals for careers in specific trades or crafts as technicians. It is also known as career education or technical education. Thompson (2002) explains that the primary goal of vocational education is to cultivate individuals' knowledge, skills, and comprehension to excel in their chosen vocational pursuits. According to Abdullahi (2011), vocational education and training play a crucial role in a country's economic development. He further highlights that, until recently, many Nigerian youths believed that a traditional four to five-year tertiary education degree was the only means of achieving personal empowerment. However, the interest in vocational education and skill acquisition has surged among graduates and post-secondary students, as they seek practical alternatives to combat unemployment and reduce dependency on white-collar jobs. Consequently, the focus of vocational education is to empower participants with specialized occupational abilities.

The purposes and objectives of vocational and technical education as specified in the National Policy of Education are:

i. To offer a proficient workforce in applied sciences, technology, and business.
ii. To equip individuals with technical knowledge and practical skills essential for the advancement of trade, agriculture, and the economy.
iii. To empower individuals with scientific knowledge to improve the environment and develop solutions for human convenience.
iv. Providing a foundational understanding of professional education in engineering and various other technologies.
v. Offering instruction and imparting skills to create artisans, technologists, and skilled workers who will be self-reliant and entrepreneurial.
vi. To enable young people to comprehend the increasing complexity of technology in an informed manner.

Acquisition of skills

A skill encompasses the talents and abilities an individual possesses, attainable through conscious personal experiences, training, observation, and practice. Skill acquisition, on the other hand, involves developing fresh competencies, practices, or methodologies, typically attained through experience or training. Many view skill acquisition as crucial in combatting severe poverty and hunger by generating job opportunities and fostering wealth creation, leading to self-sufficiency and independence (Isaac 2011). Acquiring skills has proven to be an effective way to nurture self-reliance. The core notion is that students should receive skill training in addition to their regular academic curriculum, focusing on the vital areas in demand by businesses.

According to Gumbari's proclamation in 2011, the pivotal factor in combatting hunger, poverty, joblessness, and crime is the acquisition of skills among the youth. Gumbari emphasized that addressing the matter of skill acquisition should be treated as the utmost urgent national priority, especially in light of the inadequate outcomes of our basic education system, which have led to negative consequences like armed robbery, militancy, kidnapping, and various other societal challenges.

Numerous scholars have offered distinct perspectives on skill acquisition, focusing on the various levels of achievements attained by students or graduates. Adeyemo (2014) provides a definition of vocational education, stating that it is a program centered on developing practical and applied skills at a lower educational level. The objective is to equip individuals with the necessary expertise to contribute to the workforce and maintain a skilled workforce (Nyanabo and Ahukannah, 2008).

Agbara, Chagbe, and Achi (2016) describe skill acquisition as an educational approach aimed at preparing students for various industries, agriculture, commerce, and more, typically at the senior secondary or lower tertiary level. This form of education focuses on training students for specific trades, activities, or vocations that have a long historical tradition, centered around technical or experiential tasks.

Throughout history, skill acquisition in vocational and technical education has been a long-standing tradition predating the arrival of western education. In the past, children used to learn their parents' trades through apprenticeship systems, which enabled them to master various professions such as tailoring, farming, blacksmithing, wood carving, fishing, cattle rearing, and more.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

The foundation of this study lies in the uses and gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1974), which examines how audiences interact with media and the purposes they derive from it. This theoretical approach has been particularly relevant during the initial stages of various mass communication channels, including newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet. According to this theory, media consumers are active participants who actively seek content that aligns with their expectations, rather than merely being passive recipients. Their media usage is purpose-driven and goal-oriented (Diddi & LaRose, 2006).

According to the theory, it is proposed that individuals, as rational and self-aware beings, are susceptible to the media's influence and unconsciously interpret its messages based on their own viewpoints. Additionally, the theory suggests that viewers have various options to fulfill their needs, and they select a particular medium (e.g., newspaper, radio, television, or the internet) or a specific program (e.g., newspaper column, radio show, TV station, or website) driven by their specific desires, wants, or intentions (Katz et al., 1974).

Media's Role in Education

The utilisation of media in education holds immense significance. It serves to illustrate lessons and offer students concrete examples for enhanced learning. Interactive tools like Smart Boards empower students to manipulate objects on the screen, facilitating effective demonstrations. Embracing media as an exciting educational resource adds zest to the learning experience, transforming schools into captivating and engaging environments.

    i.   Strengthens Critical-Thinking Skills

Educators have the opportunity to harness media as a means to enhance students' critical-thinking skills. Pupils can explore various forms of media, such as songs, movies, or news programs, and engage in tasks like writing, analyzing, and interpreting. By using media, teachers can pose thought-provoking questions and encourage discussions that go beyond simple comprehension challenges, fostering a deeper level of understanding.

    ii.   Appeal to Multiple Learning Styles

Various types of learners, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, are affected by media. When using an interactive Smart Board, students have the opportunity to watch movies, listen to music, and interact with digital content. Effective educators don't rely solely on one teaching style to connect with students; instead, they employ a variety of approaches to cater to a broader range of learners.

Research Methodology

In this study, a Quantitative Survey reserach design was employed, and questionnaires were administered to responders from the Ogun State Institute of Technology (OGITECH), Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, and Adeniran Ogunsanya Polytechnic. Purposive sampling was used to pick 150 students at random from these three polytechnics in Nigeria.

Data was gathered through a research questionnaire, and data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis encompassed both Inferential and Descriptive statistics. Measures of dispersion, namely Mean and Standard Deviation, were employed for data analysis, and hypotheses were tested using Multiple Regression Analysis.

Data Analysis

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	86	57.3
Female	64	42.7
Total	**150**	**100**
Age (Year)		
17- 20	47	31.3
21-23	92	61.3
24-27	11	7.4
Total	150	100
Educational background of Respondents		
National Diploma (ND)	63	42.0
Higher National Diploma (HND)	87	58.0
Total	150	100

Sources: Survey, 2023.

Based on the data presented in Table 1, it is evident that out of the 150 participants, 86 individuals (57.3%) were male, and 64 individuals (42.7%) were female. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 27 years. Regarding their educational background, 63 participants (42.9%) held a National Diploma (ND) or Higher National Diploma (HND), while 89 participants (58.0%) had other qualification.

1. Research Question One: How does Mass media influence the acquisition of vocational skills?

Table 2.1: Mass media influence on the acquisition of vocational skills

S\N	Responses	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	STANDARD DEV
1	The media offers pertinent information and valuable guidance regarding selecting a vocational career.	48 (32.0%)	65 (43.3%)	12 (8.0%)	25 (16.7%)	3.71	2.43
2	Media serves as a valuable tool for fostering discourse and preservation when it comes to vocational skills enhancement	56 (37.3%)	47 (31.3%)	28 (18.7%)	19 (12.7%)	2.93	1.69
3	The utilization of media is possible for vocational skill development inquiries and responses.	63 (42.0%)	57 (38.0%)	27 (18.0%)	3 (2.0%)	3.41	2.27
4	The media provides avenues for communication, the exchange of	61 (40.7%)	87 (58.0%)	2 (1.3%)	-	3.88	2.59

	information, and the sharing of experiences					
5	The media plays a crucial role in facilitating students' engagement in skill training and acquisition.	53(35.3%)	79 (52.7%)	18 (12.0%)	-	3.64	2.28

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

In Table 1.1, the data shows the responses of the participants regarding the media's role in providing relevant information and guidance for job selection. Out of the respondents, 32.0% (48 individuals) highly agree, 43.3% (65 individuals) agree, 8.0% (12 individuals) disagree, and 16.7% (25 individuals) strongly disagree with this notion.

Regarding the utilization of media for debating and preserving occupational skills development, there were 56 participants who highly agreed, 47 who agreed, 28 who disagreed, and 19 who strongly disagreed.

When it comes to using media for questions and answers related to the development of occupational skills, the majority of respondents (42.0% or 63 individuals) strongly believe in its effectiveness. Additionally, 38.0% (57 individuals) agreed, 18.0% (27 individuals) disagreed, and 2.0% (3 individuals) strongly disagreed with this perspective.

A significant proportion of respondents (40.7% or 61 individuals) strongly believe that media offers opportunities for communication, knowledge sharing, and experience sharing. Furthermore, 58.0% (87 individuals) agree, and 1.3% (2 individuals) disagree with this viewpoint.

Lastly, the responses regarding media's assistance in student engagement for skill training and acquisition indicate that 52.7% (79 individuals) strongly agree, 12.0% (18 individuals) agree, and 35.3% (53 individuals) disagree.

2. Research Question Two: **What are the media platforms that are most effective in promoting the acquisition of vocational skills?**

Figure 2.2: media platforms that are most effective in promoting the acquisition of vocational skills
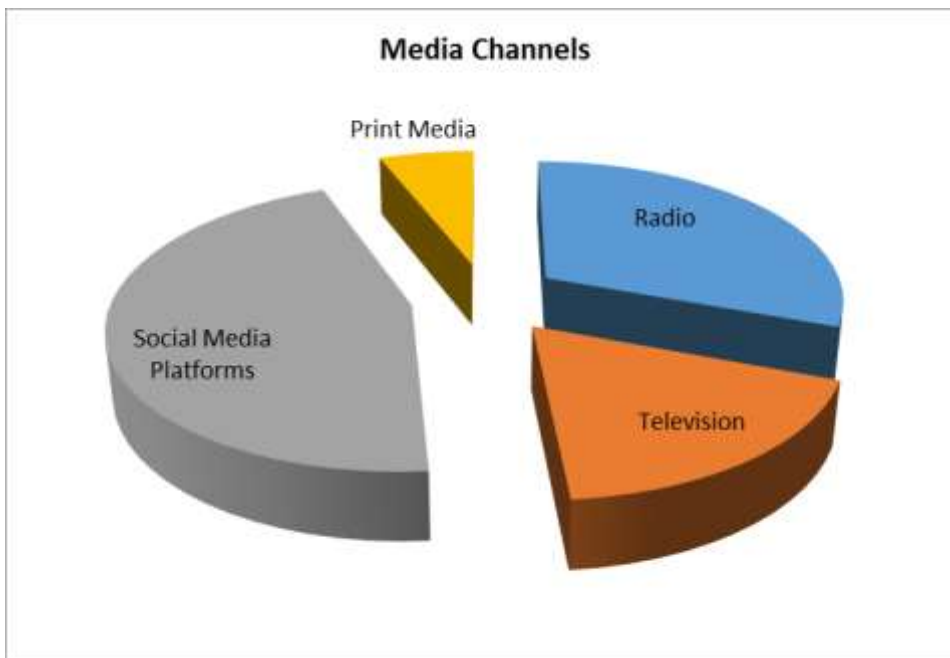
In Figure 2.2, the data indicates that a significant portion of the respondents (77;51.3%) believed that social media platforms are effective for promoting vocational skill acquisition. This percentage was higher compared to those who thought radio (49;32.7%) and television (18;12%) could be utilized for the same purpose. Conversely, a smaller proportion (6;4%) believed that print media could be used effectively to promote vocational skill acquisition.

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3. Research Question Three: What are the key challenges associated with utilising mass media to foster vocational skill acquisition?

Table 2.3: Challenges associated with utilising mass media to foster vocational skill acquisition

S\N	Responses	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Dev
1	Insufficiency of adequately skilled educators	62 (41.3%)	41 (27.3%)	28 (18.7%)	19 (12.7%)	3.53	2.14
2	Inadequate Financial Support	83 (55.3%)	65 (43.3%)	2 (1.3%)	-	3.90	2.82
3	inadequate teaching resources	78 (52.0%)	65 (43.3%)	7 (4.7%)	-	3.08	2.29
4	insufficient electricity to run media facilities	77 (51.3%)	43 (28.7%)	27 (18.0%)	3 (2.0%)	3.61	2.04

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

In Table 2.3, the data reveals that for the challenge of using mass media to promote vocational skill acquisition, 62 respondents (41.3%) strongly agree, 41 respondents (27.3%) agree, 28 respondents (18.7%) disagree, and 19 respondents (12.7%) strongly disagree that the shortage of qualified instructors is a significant concern.

Regarding the challenge of funding, 83 respondents (55.3%) strongly agree, 65 respondents (43.3%) agree, and only 2 respondents (1.3%) disagree that the lack of funding poses difficulties in using mass media for promoting vocational skill acquisition. Concerning the availability of instructional materials, 78 respondents (52.0%) strongly agree, 65 respondents (43.3%) agree, and 7 respondents (4.7%) disagree that it is one of the challenges related to the use of mass media for promoting vocational skill acquisition. The issue of lacking electricity for operating media facilities presents challenges as well, with 77 respondents (51.3%) strongly agreeing, 43 respondents (28.7%) agreeing, 27 respondents (18.0%) disagreeing, and 3 respondents (2.0%) strongly disagreeing about its impact on vocational skill acquisition through mass media.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H0): The influence of media channels on vocational skill acquisition is not significant. To assess this hypothesis, Multiple Regression Analysis was employed.

Table 3: Model Synopsis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Estimate's Standard Error
1	.802[a]	.643	.633	1.078

a. Predictors: (Constant), Print Media, Radio, Social Media, Television

Table 4: ANOVA

Model		Total Squares	df	Average Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	303.151	4	75.788	65.277	.000[b]
	Residual	168.349	145	1.161		
	Total	471.500	149			

a. Dependent Variable: Developing professional skills

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b. Predictors: Print media, radio, social media, and television (constant).

Table 5: Coefficients

Model		Unreliable Coefficients		Normative Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.044	.578		5.266	.000
	Social Media	.030	.067	2.031	17.450	.003
	Television	.975	.096	.832	10.105	.000
	Print	.136	.055	.162	2.454	.015
	Radio	1.099	.069	1.115	16.043	.000

a. Acquiring a vocational skill is a dependent variable.

The findings from the table hypothesis indicate that Media Channels, including Social Media, Radio, Television, and Print Media, collectively have a significant impact on Vocational Skill Acquisition (R^2 = .643; $F_{(4,149)}$ = 65.277; p < .05). This suggests that Media Channels jointly explain approximately 64.3% of the observed variation in Vocational Skill Acquisition.

Furthermore, the coefficients of multiple determination for the model reveal that the individual contributions of Social Media, Radio, Television, and Print Media are positively and significantly related to Vocational Skill Acquisition (β = 2.031; t = 17.450; p < .000), (β = 1.115; t = 16.043; p < .000), (β = .832; t = 10.105; p < .000), and (β = .162; t = 2.454; p < .000) respectively. Among these channels, Social Media has the highest magnitude of impact (β = 2.031), followed by Radio (β = 1.115) and Television (β = .832).

Discussion and Contribution to knowledge

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that the mass media platforms impact significant on training of Vocational Skills Development in Nigerian Polytechnics. The utilisation of these various media channels can promote vocational skill development, because it provide the necessary information on vocational skill acquisition which impact significantly on influences of job career choices. The results indicate freedom of choice to meet the needs and gratification of youth regarding skill acquisition and job carrer choices in polythechnics in Ogun state. This affirmed the submission of (Diddi & LaRose, 2006), that media usage is purpose-driven and goal-oriented.

The results of this research will provide substantial advantages to various stakeholders, including the government, polytechnics, lecturers, technologists, and researchers in the field of vocational education. The study proposes that the government and relevant authorities ensure the availability of funds to adequately finance the acquisition of media facilities essential for vocational skill training programs in Nigerian polytechnics. Additionally, the government should prioritize the training and retraining of lecturers and technologists specializing in vocational education.

Conclusion

The study employed a survey research design by using a questionnaires. The research took place in Ogun state, South West Nigeria, and involved 150 students randomly selected from three purposively selected polytechnics. The study's main finding was that media significantly influences job career choices. Among the respondents, 51.3% believed that social media platforms could promote vocational skill acquisition, while 30.7% thought that radio played a role in promoting vocational skills. Additionally, 18% of the respondents believed that television influenced their vocational skill acquisition decisions. The hypothesis drawn from the data indicated that Media Channels (Social Media, Radio, Television, and Print Media) collectively have a significant impact on the acquisition of vocational skills. Social Media had the highest magnitude of influence (= 2.031), followed by Radio (= 1.115), and Television (=.832). The shows that the use of mass media platform in training Vocational Skills Development in Nigerian Polytechnics will go a long way in impacting on their job career choices, empower them to become employers of labour and overcome the scorch of unemployement after their graduation from school

Recommendations

This research proposes that the Nigerian government and relevant authorities should ensure the availability of funds to adequately support the procurement of facilities required for vocational skill training programs in polytechnics. It is essential to incorporate media for efficient knowledge transmission.

The study suggests that the government should focus on training and retraining lecturers and technologists specifically in the field of vocational education. This measure will contribute to the enhancement of the vocational education system in Nigeria.

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