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**EXPLORING SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ROLES, PARENTAL ROLES AND CAREER PERCEPTIONS ON TVET ENROLLMENT AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA.**

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### **Abstract**

The study assessed the roles of socio-demography, parents and secondary school students' career perceptions on technical and vocational education training enrollment in Enugu State. It used descriptive survey research design to determine the perceptions of respondents relating to enrollment into TVET programs. Four research questions guided the study while the population for the study was made up of 600 Senior Secondary School Three (SS3) students purposively sampled from across the six educational zones of the State. The questionnaires whose items were face-validated by experts were used to elicit the opinions of the respondents based on a 4-point Likert rating scale. Data collected were analyzed using frequency, mean, percentage and standard deviation. Highest mean age of the respondents was 16years (33% males),(32.67% females), religious affiliation were 95.33% male Christian sand 96.33% female Christians while 57 % of the males and 59.67% of the females attended private schools. 43% of the males and 49.67% of the females were not exposed to vocational skills. Out of the 14 questionnaire items related to students' perceptions about career choices in TVET programs, 7 were agreed to and 7 were disagreed to by the respondents while all the items related to parental roles and factors that can increase enrollment into TVET were all agreed to by the respondents. The study recommended policies mandating parents and teachers' stimulation of students' interest in TVET, provision of scholarship to TVET students, employment and grants to TVET graduates of Tertiary Educational Institution and that of TVET centers for employment creation.

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**Keywords:** Socio-demography, Parental, Career, Perception, TVET.

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### **Introduction**

A key objective of Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as highlighted in the National Policy on Education, NPE (2004) is basically to provide essential teaching and training required for acquisition of skills and competence for self-reliance. The poor or limited skill development opportunities offered by Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) could be attributed to the reason why Nigeria despite being an agrarian country still imports almost all her domestic needs ranging from agricultural produce to technological equipment. For example, Enemali (2010) had observed that the world's most prosperous economies have prioritized Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) while Nigeria's scenario is remarkably different despite the policy statement in favor of vocational education.

Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is defined by United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2001) and International Labor Organization (ILO, 2001) as the aspect of the educational process involving, in addition to

general education the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupants in various sectors at economic and social life.

It is worthy to note that the various courses offered under vocational and technical education in most tertiary educational institutions are primarily intended for the preparation of primary school and secondary school teachers. However, when secondary school graduates who enroll in any of these TVET are not able to secure teaching jobs or not willing to engage in teaching, can create enterprises including enterprises identified by Okocha, *et al.*, (2022) and Okocha, *et al.*, (2023). However, a detailed assessment of socio-demographic roles, parental roles and career perceptions on secondary school students' enrollment into TVET programs in Enugu State as an avenue of improving youth employment creation reveals a dismal picture of future youth unemployment rate in the State. It is therefore, on this premise that this study seeks to assess the roles of socio-demography, parental roles and students' career perceptions concerning TVET programs as career choices and identify improvement strategies to increase enrollment into TVET programs in Enugu State.

Oluka and Okoye (2023) had identified some factors contributing to low enrollment of students in technology and vocational education programs in tertiary institutions in Enugu to include poor funding from government, inadequate equipment, tools and materials to total negligence and ignorance of the objectives of the program by the government and citizens.

An assessment of the tertiary education admission seekers' choices of TVET in Enugu State, revealed that the students' choice of courses were mostly outside vocational education programs. Muturi (2012) had observed a low number of youths in vocational and technical careers as a reflection of the secondary school students' perceptions about enrolling in TVET programs specifically in the tertiary education subsector despite its potentials to create employment. Although many studies have explained the causes of students' low enrollment into vocational and technical education programs, there is paucity of information on roles of socio-demography, students' parental roles and students' career perceptions about TVET programs, and the improvement strategies on TVET enrollment in Enugu State.

Therefore, because of the significance of senior secondary school three (SS3) students' choice of course of study and his/her employment prospects, it is therefore needful to assess the link between senior secondary school students' socio-demography, parental role and students' career perceptions on TVET enrollment which could provide a vital data for policy makers and curriculum planners on ways of improving enrollment into TVET programs in tertiary institutions.

The purpose of this study was to assess the role of students' socio-demography, parental role and students' career perceptions on TVET enrollment in Enugu State. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to;

1. Identify the socio-demographic characteristics of senior secondary school three (SS3) students in Enugu State.
2. Identify the career perceptions of senior secondary school three (SS3) students concerning enrollment into TVET programs in Enugu State.
3. Identify parental roles related to enrollment of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students into TVET programs in Enugu State.
4. Identify the factors that can increase enrollment of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students into TVET programs offered in Enugu State.

Because of the significance of senior secondary school three (SS3) students' choice of course of study and his/her employment prospects, it is therefore needful to assess these relevant questions which would guide this study. These questions include;

1. What are the socio-demographic characteristics of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students in Enugu State?
2. What are the career perceptions of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students on TVET programs in Enugu State?
3. What parental roles are related to students' enrollment into TVET programs in Enugu State?
4. What are the factors that can increase enrollment of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students into TVET programs in Enugu State?

### Literature Review

The African Union in 2007 had also posited that vocational education plays an integral role in the growth and development of human capital and the economy as it provides opportunities for youth to be self-employed and creates an avenue to be self-reliant in development of the country while supplying a capable workforce. According to Uwaifo (2010), realizing the potentialities of vocational education is limited by low enrollment of students seeking admission into tertiary institution of learning. This is in addition to large class size of the few existing Technical and Vocational Institutions, the deplorable state of training facilities of vocational institutions, underfunding of vocational education institutions (Aturu, 2010). The constant incidence of low student's enrollment into vocational courses has been a great concern to all stakeholders particularly with the prevailing high rate of unemployment.

Oke (2017) observed that there is a general perception that vocational education is meant for the academically dull and never do well students. This is orchestrated by the emphasis on paper qualification rather than skills and has jeopardized the development of vocational courses and programs which have subsequently been relegated for dropouts. Families in general and parents in particular, are therefore, the most important support system available to the child. The strongest factor in modeling a child's personality or behavior is his relationship with his parents. Coleman (2005) proposed that family influence can be separated into components such as economic, human and social capital. Hence, a family's socio-economic status correlates with academic achievements of their children at secondary level. Ibaoro (2012) indicates that the socio-economic status of a student is based on family income, parental educational level and parental occupation.

Rouse and Barrow (2006) found out that students who came from less disadvantaged families had higher average test scores and were more likely to have never been held back a grade as compared to students from the more disadvantaged families. However they highlighted that it was not clear to reflect the causal effect of family backgrounds on the child's educational achievement which creates a gap that this study sought to fill by finding out the influence of family backgrounds and perceptions on youths' enrollments into TVETs programs in Enugu State. The responsibility of training a child always lies in the hand of the parents. This statement agrees with the common assertion of sociologist that education can be an instrument of cultural change which is being taught from home and is relevant in this discuss. Therefore, it is not out of place to imagine that parental socio-economic background can have possible effects on the academic achievement of children in school (Ogunshola and Adewale, 2012). Lisa (2003) in support of the above statement believed that whatsoever affect the development environment of children would possibly affect their education or

disposition to it. It will therefore, not be out of place to say that parental status is one of such variables.

## Methods

The study adopted descriptive survey research design with the aim to determine the views and opinions of the respondents concerning TVET enrollment. This was used because it pooled the opinions of a representative sample of respondents, using its findings to generalize on the entire population. Aniekwe and Ozigbo (2002) had stated that descriptive survey is the collection of data using questionnaire for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing conditions or qualities regarding a population.

The study was conducted in the six educational zones of Enugu State, made up of Agbani, Awgu, Enugu, Nsukka, Obollo-Afor and Udi zones. A total of thirty secondary schools made up of 15 public and 15 private secondary schools (i.e. 10 secondary schools from each educational zone in the ratio of 5 public schools: 5 private secondary schools) were purposively selected. From each selected school, twenty senior secondary school three (SS3) students (10 males) and (10 females) were selected. This gave a total sample size of 600 students (300 males and 300 females) from the 30 secondary schools used for the study.

The study was carried out in Enugu State. Enugu State is one of the five States in South East Nigeria and has 17 Local Government Areas. It has a high number of secondary schools, public and privately owned. The State is situated at coordinates 6°30'N and 7°30'E, sharing borders with Abia State and Imo State to the South, Ebony State to the East, Benue State to the northeast, Kogi State to the northwest, and Anambra State to the west. The population of the State barely exceeds 33 million people (National Population Commission NPC, 2006).

Economically, the State is primarily rural and agrarian, with a sizable portion of the workforce engaged in farming, complemented by trading (18.8%) and various services such as education, crafts, construction, and transportation among others (12.9%). In urban areas, trading, crafts and construction dominate the occupational landscape (National Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

Purposive sampling technique was used for this study. Secondary school students in their final year of study in Senior secondary schools (i.e. SS3 students) were purposively sampled. 600 respondents from 30 purposively selected senior secondary schools were used for the study.

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire titled **“Exploring Socio-demographic Roles, Parental Roles and Students’ Career Perceptions on Technical and Vocational Education Training Enrollment in Enugu State”**. The questionnaire comprised close-ended items where respondents were asked to respond to items measuring their level of agreement with the item question about TVET. This questionnaire was developed based on extensive review of related literature and on the purpose of the study and structured along multi-choice response model. The instrument was divided into four sections, A, B, C and D. Section A elicits information on the socio-demography of the respondents, section B contains items relating to career perception of the respondents concerning TVET programs, section C contained itemized questions on parental roles relating to TVET enrollment while section D contained itemized questions about factors that can

increase respondents' choice or willingness to enroll into TVET programs. The respondents were to tick against the desired response category based on his or her opinion. The questionnaire was structured to elicit the opinion of the respondents on the item statement based on a 4-point rating scale assigned four point numerical values describing items being measured. Thus;

Scale items	Numerical Points
Strongly agree (SA)	4
Agree (A)	3
Disagree (D)	2
Strongly Disagree (SD)	1

Therefore, items with means= score of 2.50 and above were accepted as agreed while items with mean score below 2.50 meant disagreed.

The instrument was face-validated by three experts from Departments of Curriculum Development, Agricultural Education and Business Education, all of the Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, Enugu State. Corrections were made on appropriateness of language, relevance to subject matter, precision of items and ambiguity of statement. Reliability coefficient using the Cronbach Alpha reliability test was 0.79.

Distribution and collection of the instrument was done by hand through the co-ordination of the researchers. About 90 per cent of the copies of the questionnaires were retrieved and analyzed. Data collected were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 16.0). Frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations were used to summarize and analyze the data.

The following decision guided the interpretation of the results of the analysis. Any item with a mean score of  $\geq 2.5$  was regarded as agreed, while any mean score of less than 2.50 was regarded as not agreed or disagreed.

## Findings

**Research question 1:** *What are the socio-demographic characteristics of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students in Enugu State.*

**Table 1:** Socio-demographic characteristics of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students in Enugu State.

Socio-Demographic characteristics	Male		Female	
	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
<b>Age</b>				
15-16	99.00	33.00	98.00	32.67
16-17	84.00	28.00	81.00	27.00
17-18	63.00	21.00	65.00	21.66
18-19	54.00	18.00	56.00	18.67
Total	300.00	100	300	100
<b>School type</b>				
Public school	129	43.00	121	40.33
Private school	171	57.00	179	59.67
Total	300	100	300	100

<b>School location</b>				
Urban areas	204	68	214	71.33
Rural	96	32	86	28.67
<b>Religion</b>				
Christianity	286	95.33	289	96.33
Islamic	2	0.67	3	1.0
Traditional	12	4	8	2.67
Total	300	100	300	100
<b>Parents' occupation</b>				
Farming	57	19.0	59	19.67
Civil servant	52	17.33	51	17.0
Trading	102	34.00	111	37.0
Artisan	89	29.67	79	26.33
Total	300	100	300	100
<b>Exposure to vocational skills</b>				
Highly exposed	55	18.33	43	14.33
Moderately exposed	115	38.33	108	36
Not Exposed	130	43.33	149	49.67

### Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 revealed that majority (33% male) and (32.67% female) were within the age of 15-16 years and mostly attended private senior secondary schools (57% males) and 59.67% females). Majority of the respondents were living and schooling in the urban areas (68% males), (71.33% females); mostly Christians (95.33% males) (96.33% females) and about 43% males and 49.67% females not being exposed to vocational skills.

The implication of these findings align with the opinions of Sanditov and Verspagen (2011), who stated that socio-demographic factors have encouraging or impeding effect on the intentions of individuals to choose a career path. They further explained that factors such as family background, education, work experience mostly acquired from involvement in parents' occupation, risk attitude, over-optimism, preference for independence and the norms and values of a society influence the choice of individual's life career. Also variables such as age, gender, education, work experience, role models and family background have been found to predict whether an individual will venture into technical and vocational courses (Hatak, Harms and Fink, 2015). Also, the findings on parental occupations could be attributed to the findings of Ibalara (2012) on parental occupation being a factor that could determine the socioeconomic status of a student.

**Research question 2:** *What are the career perceptions of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students on TVET programs in Enugu State?*

**Table 2:** Career Perceptions of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students on career choices in TVET programs offered in Enugu State.

Perceptions:	Male		Female		Remarks
	X2	SD1	X2	SD2	
TVET courses are not lucrative	2.50	0.86	2.66	1.75	Agree
TVET courses are lucrative	2.40	1.08	2.46	0.64	Not Agree
TVET courses are for the less privileged	2.50	0.86	2.60	1.08	Agree
TVET courses are for the elite's children	2.27	0.86	2.00	1.30	Not Agree
TVET courses are for academically-bright students	2.67	0.64	2.61	0.42	Agree

TVET courses are for less academically bright students	2.28	0.86	3.05	2.19	Not Agree
TVET course would guarantee employment after graduation	2.88	0.86	3.05	2.19	Agree
TVET courses would not guarantee employment after graduation	2.72	0.86	2.94	1.75	Agree
TVET courses would enhance national development	2.61	1.08	2.77	0.43	Agree
TVET courses would not enhance national development	2.16	0.86	3.22	2.19	Not Agree
TVET courses are for rural dwellers	2.22	0.86	2.16	0.86	Not Agree
TVET courses are for urban dwellers	2.27	1.08	2.23	0.86	Not Agree
TVET course are for students with low aspirations	2.67	1.07	2.85	0.89	Agree
TVET courses are not for students with low aspirations	2.21	1.08	3.26	2.23	Not Agree

**Survey, 2024**

**Note:**

X1= mean for respondents (male secondary school students)

X2= mean for respondents (female secondary school students)

SD1= Standard deviation for respondents (male secondary school students)

SD2= Standard deviation for respondents (female secondary school students)

Table 2 above presented the data collected concerning the career perceptions of the senior secondary school three (SS3) students relating to TVET enrollment. Based on the responses of the respondents, seven out of fourteen presented received positive response while seven received negative response. However, the result in table 2 can confirm the observations of Isiwu and Nwakpadolu (2013), who reported that most students seeking entry into universities for instance in South East, Nigeria preferred to study general management, physical sciences, medicine, engineering and other professional courses to vocational and technical educational courses like agricultural education, home economics, business education, fine and applied arts education etc.

This suggests that Pre-vocational subjects’ curriculum should be improved on at the secondary school level so as to expose and capture the conception and view of both the male and female students to tally with respect to the TVET programs offered in Tertiary Educational institutions. This is very important because having a fairly good perception of TVE courses will encourage enrollment and subsequently create employment in the technical and vocational sectors. This will equally influence their perception, attitude and choice towards pursuing higher degree in TVE disciplines. This is in line with the report of Ogunremi *et al* (2012) who asserts that students’ willingness to study TVE courses is dependent on the level of perception of students about the courses.

The findings were also supported by the report of Oluka and Okoye (2023) who reported that pupils and parents did not recognize TVET as integral part of western education because of the low priority accorded to it by the government and being an offshoot of the reports by Oluka (2006) and Okoye (2007) who had reported a poor enrollment scenario in technology education which has persisted in Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) at 13.14% and enrollment in Industrial Technology Education for 2006/2007 1% academic session of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

Table 2 results are supported by Oke (2017) who had observed that there is a general perception that vocational education is meant for the academically dull and never do well students.

**Research question 3:** *What parental roles are related to students' enrollment into TVET programs in Enugu State?*

**Table 3:** Parental roles related to enrollment of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students into TVET programs in Enugu State.

	Male		Female		Remarks
	X1	SD1	X2	SD2	
Educated parents support students' enrollment in TVET	2.52	0.86	2.65	0.91	Agree
Educated parents do not support students' enrollment into TVET	2.87	0.84	2.61	0.85	Agree
Parents' occupation influence students' choice for TVET	3.40	1.77	2.99	1.45	Agree
Parents' occupation does not influence students' choice for TVET	2.67	0.87	3.00	0.97	Agree
High income parents are interested in TVET for their children	2.22	0.64	2.98	0.65	Agree
High income parents are not interested in TVET for their children	2.78	0.84	3.11	0.74	Agree
Parents should explain the benefits of TVET to their children	3.22	1.50	3.26	1.15	Agree
Parents should help their children discover their career path	3.45	1.89	3.57	1.56	Agree
Parent should help their children get informed about TVET	3.10	1.07	2.78	1.00	Agree
Parents should help their children discover their latent potentials	2.78	0.81	2.79	0.97	Agree
Parents should encourage their children to visit skill centers	2.98	0.98	2.88	0.97	Agree
Parents should identify laudable vocations within their communities.	2.87	0.91	3.01	0.96	Agree

**Field Survey, 2024**

**Note:**

X1= mean for respondents (male secondary school students)

X2= mean for respondents (female secondary school students)

SD1= Standard deviation for respondents (male secondary school students)

SD2= Standard deviation for respondents (female secondary school students)

Table 3 above shows the parental roles relating to TVET enrollment in Enugu State. The data shows that all the items presented were indicated as significant parental roles that are related to TVET enrollment by senior secondary school (i.e. SS3) students all the items presented received positive responses with mean score greater than 2.5. This implies that all the respondents agreed that parents had significant roles to play in enrollment of students into TVET programs.

The data in Table 3 reflects the findings of Kim (2002) who studied the relationship between parent's financial and human capital in a sampled low-income minority families, found that mothers with higher education had higher expectations for their children's academic achievement and that these expectations were related to their children's career choices in particular and academic achievement in general. The family of secondary school student or its graduate and the parents in particular are therefore, the most important support system available to the students. According to Coleman (2008), a family's socio-economic status correlates with academic choices and achievement at secondary school level. Ibalaoro (2012) indicated that the socio-economic status of a student is based on family income, parental

educational level and parental occupation. All the factors presented in Table 4 had a positive influence on the students' willingness to choose any of the TVE courses offered in Tertiary Educational institutions as a career.

The findings on parental roles explains the assertion of Coleman (2008) that parents and family background or economic status of the parents are the most important support system available to the child including his/her career choices. These findings are also consistent with Ibalaro (2012) who suggested that family's socioeconomic status correlates with academic achievements of their children at the secondary level.

**Research question 4:** *What are the factors that can increase enrollment of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students into TVET programs in Enugu State?*

**Table 4:** Factors that can increase enrollment of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students into TVET programs offered in Enugu State.

	Male		Female		Remarks
	X1	SD1	X2	SD2	
Teachers' influence	2.67	0.88	3.11	1.07	Agree
Peer pressure influence	2.58	0.78	2.54	0.98	Agree
Parental background	3.01	1.02	2.99	0.99	Agree
Students' parental influence	3.45	1.17	3.45	1.17	Agree
Personal interest of the student	3.02	0.98	2.99	0.99	Agree
Perceived Prospective economic benefits	2.78	0.67	3.01	1.01	Agree
Career guidance	2.99	0.78	3.01	1.01	Agree
Quest to be self-employed	3.07	1.08	3.11	1.03	Agree
Academic performance	3.56	1.27	3.43	1.20	Agree
Parents' occupation	3.76	1.34	3.88	1.39	Agree
Societal influence	2.78	1.01	3.02	1.01	Agree
Pre-vocational experience	3.07	0.98	3.18	1.02	Agree
Accessibility/proximity to TVET courses	3.17	0.99	3.23	1.12	Agree
Availability of TVET Scholarship Schemes	3.56	1.11	3.70	1.23	Agree
Employment prospects	3.66	1.15	3.61	1.07	Agree

**Field Survey, 2024**

**Note:**

X1= mean for respondents (male secondary school students)

X2= mean for respondents (female secondary school students)

SD1= Standard deviation for respondents (male secondary school students)

SD2= Standard deviation for respondents (female secondary school students)

The results in Table 4 showed the statement items had a mean range of 2.54 to 3.88. The means were above the cut off mark of 2.50. They strongly confirm that the items were factors that could increase enrollment into TVET by senior secondary school (SS3) students. The Table identified about 15 factors that can increase enrollment of senior secondary school three (i.e. SS3) students into TVET programs offered in Tertiary Educational institutions in Enugu State.

Among these factors, the most influencing factor rests against parents' occupation with mean score of 3.76 (for male respondents) and 3.88 (for female respondents) which states that parents' occupation has the highest effect on students' enrollment into TVET programs. Oluka and Okoye (2023) had identified similar factors

## Conclusion

Exploring socio-demographic roles, parental roles and career perceptions on TVET enrollment among senior secondary school students in Enugu State, Nigeria is imperative in addressing the challenges of unemployment in Enugu State in particular and Nigeria in general. Ideally, technical and vocational education trainings entail scholars being skillfully developed for industrial, economic and social progress for national development. It offers the requisite skills, technical and professional manpower needed for national development. Being that there has been a continued low enrollment into these TVET programs and faced with unprecedented youth unemployment rate arising from the Post-COVID-19 realities, economic crisis and school disruptions due to insecurities; stakeholders in education should make concerted efforts at reversing this ugly trend as this will ensure technical and vocational education in the Tertiary Educational institutions will contribute maximally in job creation and national development.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

- a. Considering the prospects of TVE programs offered in Tertiary Educational institutions, parents and teachers should play a key role of influencing students to choose career in any of the TVET programs. Policy requesting that students indicate their career interest(s) on admission forms with evidence of parental consent should be enacted in secondary school's admission requirements.
- b. Vocational educators should increase their capacity, skill and competence in the TVET programs as it will help to increase and sustain the interest of students in choosing any TVE programs. Having a qualification in TVET should be made a requirement to be a licensed vocational educator and continuous qualifying certifications institutionalized as requirements for career progression of vocational educators.
- c. Pre-vocational subjects' curriculum should be improved to meet up with the current trend in the sector. This will help to erase the negative mindsets people have about TVET programs as professions. The review duration should be stated in the policy documents regulating vocational TVET programs.
- d. Government at various levels should introduce programs such as scholarship schemes, graduate employment, and provision of loans, grants and subsidy to graduate students. This will attract and sustain the interest of the youths towards the enrollment into of any of the TVET programs offered in Tertiary Educational institutions. These suggested programs should be mainstreamed within government agencies with annual budgetary allocations.

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