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DOI: https://doi.org/10.38140/pie.v41i4.6998

e-ISSN 2519-593X

Perspectives in Education

2023 41(4): 128-142

PUBLISHED:
29 December 2023

RECEIVED:
5 January 2023

ACCEPTED:
10 October 2023

The economic rationale for the provision of technical/ vocational education (TVE) in colonial Ghana: Implications for practice

Abstract

The paper examines the economic rationale for the provision of technical and vocational education (TVE) in the Colonial Ghana. It highlights some key lessons drawn from the study, particularly in term of the Ghanaian contemporary search for a more pragmatic policy formulation for TVE. Data were retrieved from primary sources in the form of archival materials and some secondary sources, as well some interview sessions with two personalities who were actively involved in the provision of TVE during the period. Chronological and thematic analysis of the data was utilised. The study revealed that the missionary bodies and the colonial administration promoted TVE largely because of economic reasons. It further argues that this level of vigour could unfortunately not keep pace with the developmental needs of the country due mainly to factors such as negative perception towards TVE, the failure of successive governments to provide the requisite infrastructure and equipment for the steady promotion of TVE, lack of entrepreneurial training for graduates of the TVE institutions and virtual non-existence of local industries to absorb these graduates.

Keywords: *arts and crafts, colonial, economic, Colonial Ghana, missionaries, missions, rationale, technical/vocational education*

1. Introduction

This paper is focused on the economic rationale for the provision of TVE in the Colonial Ghana (currently modern Ghana) from 1828 to 1957. The purpose, objectives, and significance of the study are discussed. In addition, the review of related literature and a description of research design have been treated. The detailed description of the economic rationale for the provision of TVE during the missionary era and the colonial administration have also been examined. The paper again analyses the lessons that could be drawn from such a historical discourse for contemporary Ghanaian TVE policy formulation and its implementation.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Economic factors are very crucial to the accelerated development of human societies (African Union 2007; World Bank, 2018). No doubt, an acquisition of necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter is intrinsically connected to the well-being of human beings and constitutes the pivot of all aspects of life including governance, health, education, and security. According to Lester (2013), Maslow's hierarchy of needs clearly demonstrates this fact of life. Consequently, almost all human endeavours greatly concentrate on the development of economic capacities of the individual members in the society. Over the years, human societies have almost invariably developed various strategies to achieve economic goals of life. Significantly, one popular avenue for the achievement of such goals is formal schooling. In the Gold Coast, several attempts were made by the British colonial administrators and its allies particularly the missionary bodies to vigorously promote industrial/technical education in the country (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Boadu, 2021).

Several scholars, including Foster (1966), Odamtten (1978), Boateng (2012), and Boadu (2021), have discussed the economic functions of education in the missionary and colonial periods in the Gold Coast in different ways, but it appears that their narratives, even when they are deeply historical, have not, in a more systematic and detailed manner, probed deeper into the economic rationale for the provision of TVE in the Gold Coast. Yamada (2005), for instance, argues that the provision of TVE in the periods of Gordon Guggisberg and Jerry Rawlings in colonial and post-colonial Ghana, respectively, was based more on moralistic principles than on any other principles.

Boadu's (2021) article on "Developments in history education in Ghana", for example, highlights important trends in the provision of education in Ghana from precolonial times through colonial times to post-independence period. In this attempt, he focuses on the teaching of history in the country's schools and bemoans the fact that after the 1987 educational reforms in the country, the teaching and learning of history, particularly at pre-tertiary level, were largely de-emphasised in spite of its usefulness promoting harmony, nationalism, tolerance, peaceful coexistence and critical thinking. Even though Boadu sees the introduction of history as a subject in primary schools by the New Patriotic Party in 2017 as problematic due to "completely unprepared teachers" for the subject, he appreciates the capacity of this initiative to increase the number of students offering history at the senior high school level.

Boadu's work provides some information into the provision of TVE in colonial Ghana, Understandably, such pieces of information are inadequate for a detailed study of the economic rationale for TVE during the colonial period, as it was perhaps not his intention to engage in a detailed and systematic study of such phenomenon.

On their part, Adu-Gyamfi and Anderson (2021) focus on history education in Ghana and point out significant events that have shaped this aspect of education with respect to tradition of change and continuity. No doubt the paper is an instructive discourse on 'what was been there' (tradition) in history education in Ghana and the factors and forces (including intellectual, cultural, nationalism, political and educational) that have continuously precipitated revolutions in the provision of history education. However, their discussions did not take into consideration the economic factors underpinning colonial education in the country; a period which forms an integral part of their discourse.

Significantly, a critical and systematic analysis of the economic rationale for the provision of TVE during the colonial period would provide opportunity to assess whether the rationale had any influence on practice and to provide practical guidelines for contemporary and future TVE endeavours.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The thrust of the paper is to undertake a historical analysis of the economic rationale of the provision and practice of TVE in the Colonial Ghana and to delineate appropriate lessons to guide contemporary and future practices.

1.3 Significance of the study

The study seeks to contribute to the build-up of knowledge on TVE, particularly in Ghana. Furthermore, it provides authentic data from the national archival documents retrieved from the Public Record and Archival Administration Department (PRAAD), old school logbooks, interview accounts and relevant secondary materials during the period under review for current practitioners in the education industry to critically appreciate the significance of economic rationale of TVE and thus delineate the necessary lessons for contemporary policy making and implementation. It would also serve as an impetus for TVE teachers to ensure the provision of powerful learning environment for this aspect of education so as to reap the maximum benefits from its effective teaching.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The concept of TVE

Generally, TVE could be described as a programme of study that is concerned with the acquisition of practical and manipulative skills and the translation of these skills into productive purposes for the benefit of human beings. Masri (1994) aptly elucidates the concept of TVE in the following lines:

> [T]hose aspects 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 occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (Masri, 1994: 36).

Masri further maintains that the philosophical underpinning of the content of TVE should not be thought only in terms of "perceptual knowledge by practice and acquaintance" but also in terms of "conceptual knowledge by theory and description" (Masri, 1994: 36).

The argument by Masri in favour of the judicious blend of theory and practice in the study of TVE is justified on the grounds that practical knowledge alone is very likely to produce parochial and narrow-minded personalities who would not be able to adapt to our rapidly changing societies. On the other hand, "theoretical craftsmen" would simply have no place in industry. Adams, Middleton and Ziderman (1992) also underscore this important fact of the intrinsic connection that should exist between the quest for the acquisition of practical skills and the gaining of theoretical knowledge in the TVE educational efforts. They observe that "training in specific skills is more effective when trainees have strong literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills" (Adams, Middleton & Ziderman, 1992: 132).

This observation is contingent upon the fact that we now live in a constantly changing economic environment characterised by new technologies which require an academic secondary education configured to contribute "to individual productivity and trainability by developing student capacity to learn, to use mathematical concepts to solve problems, and to communicate verbally and in writing" (Adams *et al.*, 1992: 132). Boateng (2012) defines TVE as "the educational processes that involve the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge aimed at discovering and developing the individual for employment in various sectors of economic and social life" (Boateng ,2012: 108). Afeti (2007) also explains that the delivery of quality TVE leads to an increased productivity, economic growth, and social amelioration. Almeida, Amaral and Felicio (2015) also emphasise the economic benefits of TVE as follows: "within this context of [economic difficulties] vocational and technical education and training (VET) has emerged as an option that offers quicker student integration into the workforce and more directly meets the labour market" (Almeida *et al.*, 2015: xv).

Yamada's (2005) discourse is of particular interest to this write-up because of its insistence that the main reason for the provision of TVE during the eras of Guggisberg in colonial Ghana and Rawlings in post-colonial Ghana was moral. He contends that "vocationalisation" in both eras "was often discussed in moralistic terms, not necessarily in terms of economic demands for a trained workforce as has been the case in international circles" (Yamada, 2005: 72). In other words, he writes that "vocationalisation of secondary education has been seen as a means of character development, a way to avoid social problems of urban migration or youth employment" (Yamada, 2005: 72). However, the unanswered question is that the phenomenon and problems of rural-urban drift, particularly, among graduates of pre-tertiary educational institutions during these two eras were still on the ascendancy. It is also a fact that a large section of the Ghanaian populace still cast contemptuous looks at vocational education and the question is: What accounts for this phenomenon? Again, it could be said affirmatively that the two eras that Yamada considered cannot provide adequate information about the rationale for TVE in Ghana. Other periods could be studied for a comprehensive treatment of the rationale for TVE in Ghana. Thus, it seems that another critical look at the policies regarding the economic rationale of TVE for colonial Ghana would be indispensable.

Afeti (2009) also discusses TVE in Ghana but focuses largely on management, benefits, and challenges of TVE in contemporary Ghana. Since his work does not cover the colonial period, it would be significant to fill the gap. Boateng (2012) focuses on the various policy initiatives of TVE in the country and the numerous challenges that have bedevilled the practice of TVE in the country. Her call for an effective leadership style to effectively manage TVE in Ghana to achieve its anticipated objectives is particularly useful in these days of numerous socio-economic difficulties. Clearly, the focus of Boateng (2012) and the thrust of this paper are substantially different. McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975), Graham (1971) and a host of others provide a lot of insight into the provision of TVE in Ghana. Akyeampong (2007) is also largely concerned about the various challenges that have crippled TVE, particularly after the era of Dr Kwame Nkrumah and calls for proactive measures to resuscitate the TVE in the country from collapse.

However, the present study departs from the above works in that it focuses comprehensively on the rationale for TVE during the colonial period and its implications for TVE policy formulation and implementation in contemporary Ghana.

2.2 Economic functions of education

One of the main purposes of education, in particular, its aspects that deal with the acquisition of practical skills and vocational training, is to serve the economic needs of the human society. In contemporary societies, education, in its economic sense, prepares the individual to meet the manpower needs of his or her environment. (Karam, 2006; Kerre, 1996) Through education, people acquire various skills and competences to perform various economic responsibilities such as teaching, farming, banking, and financing, entrepreneurship, administration, insurance, catering, fashion, and textiles designing, nursing, pharmacy and medicine. In executing its economic functions, education further instils some ideal qualities into its beneficiaries, which are necessary to keep the economy alive. Such qualities, which are also referred as "job-maintaining skills" include honesty, punctuality, obedience, sense of initiative and integrity. All these economic functions of education are ultimately aimed at economic growth, increased productivity and national development and are vitally significant for the accelerated development of any society (Almeida, Amaral & Felicio, 2015). Karam (2006) acknowledges the vigorous promotion of VTE (Vocational Technical Education) in Lebanon as the panacea to the myriad of economic challenges facing the country. He thinks that a smooth linkage between VTE and the marketplace in Lebanon is the surest way of providing quality and relevant VTE in Lebanon, a country which has similar economic characteristics with most developing countries including modern Ghana. He intimates that "in order to make the best use of resources and provide high quality VTE for every student, it is essential that VTE system and market work together seamlessly" (Karam, 2006: 260).

Palmer (2009) writing about the National Apprenticeship Programme (NAP) as part of the overall government's policy on TVE in Ghana admits that the generally fragile economy of the country could be rejuvenated through the provision of TVET and apprenticeship training which continue to be seen as an important link to the world of work, and also as a means of providing the unemployed (school leavers) with employable skills.

Undoubtedly, when education is provided with the view to serve an egalitarian or democratic role, it provides the platform for all its beneficiaries to develop their unique and diversified talents or capabilities for accelerated socio-economic development. That being the case, young people who are naturally endowed with technical and vocational capabilities, for example, as exhibited through initial basic education, would also be given equal opportunities to develop their capabilities in relevant technical and vocational institutions to continuously serve as a *flourishing reservoir* of human resource capacities for increased productivity and economic growth.

2.3 Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs and its inherent economic factors

In 1954, Abraham Maslow proposed a classification of human basic needs into five categories, namely physiological, safety and security, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualisation (Lester, 2013) Significantly, he arranged these needs hierarchically and submitted that the lower needs were more powerful (prepotent) than the higher needs. For example, without food, water, warmth, we cannot properly experience intimate relationships and move on to experience prestige and self-actualisation. Lester succinctly describes this mutual relationship by intimating that "the more these basic needs were satisfied, the better would be the psychological health of the individual" (Lester, 2013:15). Understandably, one does not need

to derive satisfaction from the lower needs before progressing on to meet the higher-level growth needs (McLeod, 2018); yet the basic physiological needs of food, clothing, shelter and health are indispensable to a fulfilling life and requires some strenuous educational efforts in TVE to acquire them in qualitative and quantitative means.

2.4 The human capital theory

The human capital theory, which stresses the mutual relationship between TVE, and economic development, could be applicable in this discourse. It postulates that an individual can increase his/her productive capacity if he receives higher education and skills training. Blundell *et al.* (1999) opine that the human capital theory focuses on investment in education as a tool to facilitate the acquisition of skills and training which increases capital. Sweetland aptly explains that" human capital theory suggests that the individual and society derives economic benefits from investment in people" (Sweetland, 1996: 341). Investing in people means developing their innate capacities through the provision of environmentally friendly knowledge, appropriate knowledge and socially approved values that would make them self-reliant in their quest to create decent and peaceful societies.

Tan (2014) observes that the knowledge and skills acquired through education tend to increase productivity at workplace. When there is an increase in productivity, it usually leads to an increase in the income of the individual since wages and salaries in the labour market are determined by the individual's productivity. In one of its reports, the World Bank (2018) intimates that:

> in particular, low levels of education and training impede the productivity of the African labour and perpetuate the vicious cycle of low economic growth, and low education development in spite of gains made in access to secondary and higher education.

2.5 Research design and periodisation of the study

Historical methods were used in the study. Under this method, Marius' (1999) four modes of historical writings, namely description, narration, expositions, and arguments, were largely followed. Primary data in the form of office records, official letters/correspondences retrieved from PRAAD and old logbooks as well as interview sessions were utilised in the study. Secondary data in the form of books and articles were also analysed to strengthen analysis of the primary data. The discussions of the data are presented thematically and using chronological approach.

Significantly, two major divisions within the Gold Coast period, namely 1828 to1918 and 1919 to 1956, were used in the study. 1828 marked the beginning of effective institutionalisation of TVE in the Gold Coast by (foreign) missionary bodies and it would be significant to launch the study from this point. The second period, 1919 to 1956, also witnessed the participation of colonial government and the 'apprentice' government of Dr Nkrumah in the provision of TVE in the Gold Coast.

2.6 Economic rationale of TVE during the missionary era (1828-1918)

The pioneer missionary bodies in the Gold Coast namely, Basel, Wesleyan, Bremen, Catholic, and Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) were keen and enthusiastic about promoting TVE. Notably, these missions were the first to have institutionalised TVE in the country. The Basel mission, in particular, were noted for their educational crusades in bookbinding, agriculture, stone

quarrying, masonry, carpentry, tailoring, and blacksmithing at virtually all their schools in the country (Twum-Barima, 1972; Antwi, 1992). Odamtten's assessment of the impact of these missionary educational endeavours in the Gold Coast is instructive: "it can be seen then that those who had access to missionary education began to improve their ways of living, and the communities in which they lived, began to aspire to such standards" (Odamtten, 1978: 141). Babalola, describing the policies of the Presbyterian (Basel) missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century, explains the rationale for their concentration on practical education. He notes that "it was the policy of the Presbyterian [Basel] missionaries to produce converts who would engage in gainful employment and be better citizens" (Babalola, 1988: 84). Arguably, the relationship between gainful employment and better citizenry could be said to be symbiotic. When people are gainfully employed, they, all things being equal, develop the obsession to protect their dignity and social prestige which normally serve as a precursor for an ethically grounded lifestyle.

The rationale of the vigorous promotion of TVE by the missionaries has also been aptly described by McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975). According to these authors, the rationale was very economic, particularly for the Basel mission. First, it was to make the beneficiary students "self-supporting" and secondly "caused a general improvement in standards of living and particularly in house building" (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975: 31). Foster also provides another instructive comment on the economic rationale for the provision of TVE by the Basel mission specifically. He elucidates:

> the Basel mission, recognising the fact that industrial training is a most important factor in the education of a … nation, tried to exercise an every-day influence on the people, making the spade and other instruments go hand-in- hand with the Bible (Foster, 1965: 87).

Graham (1971) corroborates this description regarding the practical and technical focus of the Basel mission's educational efforts by saying that

> the Basel mission tried to use the spade and other working tools side by side with the Bible … the pupils' first three years of school were taken up with intensive agricultural and manual instruction as well as normal classroom work" (Graham, 1971: 122).

Graham (1971:122) further intimates that "the last decades of the nineteenth century saw practically every school in the interior boasting of a small plantation where the pupils grew such crops as coffee and sisal hemp".

The Wesleyans were also interested in TVE. Graham (1971: 120) again explains that "these men [Wesleyan missionaries] and others like them were of the opinion that all the instructions that could be given the African boys and girls would be of little value if they were not taught habits of industry". The Mission consequently established farming stations to teach rudimentary lessons relating to best methods in practical agriculture. A foremost pioneer missionary of the Wesleyan Mission, T.B Freeman, for example, set up two model farms at Dominasi and Manso in the present Central region of Ghana. The plan was that there were to be resident missionaries in these towns "who would instruct in the practical of agriculture all natives whether Christians or heathen who might feel disposed to turn their attention to it" (Graham, 1971: 121).

In 1914, a missionary of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, W.H. Lewis, wrote a letter to the colonial secretary resident in Accra, the capital of Gold Coast, requesting a land "to open a head station and operate in the Gold Coast, independent of Sierra Leone" (PRAAD,

Ghana, 1914). Remarkably, in providing reasons for the place of choice in Ashanti, Lewis intimated the mission's profound interest in "industrial education" and good fertile farming soil" (PRAAD, Ghana, 1914). In 1931, two decades after the establishment of the Agona SDA Infant/Junior School, the General Manager of the Adventist Mission Schools, J.H. Fielding, insisted on intensive agricultural activities in the school. This was primarily aimed at producing food to feed the boarding pupils and to sell the surplus for the running of the school. In 1938, a scintillating account of the Agona SDA Mission Infant/Senior School's agricultural/farming activities was given by Fielding. He noted that "gardening is receiving the serious attention of the school" (Agona SDA Mission,1938: 283).

It is on record that in the 1940s and early 50s, a Catholic missionary by the name of Father Perrault, who was transferred from Navrongo to Tamale in Northern Ghana, "had plenty of extra-curricular occupations: electricity, photo and projection department, not to speak of general, printing and publishing, building, and even magic at Navrongo" (Mission School, 1953). The versatility of the curriculum cannot be overemphasised; however, the "magic" that was thought to be connected to the curricula is very vague, but it could be that the local people were so mystified with the electrical, photo and projection works that they thought that spirits were at work and attributed that to magic. Whatever the case, there was no doubt that these vocational activities had a tremendous influence on the local people. It could be said that the missions' provision of TVE was largely necessitated by the general policy of developing local resources for socio-economic development through skill-acquisition by their converts. This fact was underscored by the Colonial Secretary for Gold Coast in 1860, William Ross, when he made an instructive comment about the sanguine effect of the missionaries' industrial education on social amelioration and general economic development in the country. Ross is quoted as saying that,

> it [industrial education given by the missionaries] has been of great use particularly in Accra You see it in every form; at Accra the missionaries have introduced carts; they are teaching the people to make carts; boots, and shoes; they have a sort of industrial school (Odamtten, 1978: 141).

The promotion of these crafts by the missionaries was directly aimed at making the new converts productive and self-reliant and, based on their Christian orientation, appreciate the dignity in labour as God's gift to human beings.

The concomitant effect of such an economic aim on the moral restructuring and sobriety of the converts and their long-term effects on governance and colonisation cannot be overemphasised. The eventual colonising expeditions of the European countries had to start from "somewhere" and this somewhere must be contextually defined as the vigorous beginning of the creation of "faithful" agents who could "plough" and "fertilise" the prospective colonies to make them economically productive and politically submissive. To achieve this in a formal setting was to teach new techniques of farming and other economic ventures to reduce hunger and promote social advancement.

It is somewhat disturbing that when the missions eventually became entrenched entities as religious organisations (churches) with local leadership, especially after the attainment of independence from British colonial rule, their promotion of economic ventures, particularly farming and vocational activities, which ensures the availability of food items, clothing, and shelter at affordable prices, among their members has depreciated so much. The contemporary Ghanaian society has largely resorted to the importation of common vegetables such as tomatoes, onions, and fruits such as watermelon at a high cost.

2.7 The colonial administration and economic rationale of TVE in the Gold Coast

From 1919 to 1956, the British colonial administrators in the country continued to recognise the pivotal role of the provision of TVE as one of the most pragmatic solutions to the socio-economic challenges that were facing the country during the period. The era of Gordon Guggisberg was characterised by the provision of practical knowledge and skills which were bound for vibrant economic growth and higher productivity (Buah,1980). The four Junior Trade Schools established by Guggisberg at strategic locations in the country namely Asuansi in the Central Region, Kibi [Kyebi] in the Eastern Region, Mampong in Ashanti Region and Yendi (later to Tamale) in the Northern Region in the early 1920s were primarily aimed at equipping the pupils with employable skills in various environmentally relevant trades and vocations to be self-reliant responsible and morally upright citizens. In 1923, the organiser of practical education in the country describing the choice of Mampong as one of the ideal places for the Trade Schools explained that the location was endowed with adequate economic resources to warrant the establishment of the school there. He stated that "the forest is at its thickest… twenty acres have already been cleared and laid out in an athletic area, school grounds and food farms and plots. It is an enchanting spot and with careful development, it should prove an ideal location" (Hedog-Jones, 1923). The fact that food production was one of the objectives of the school indicates strongly that the development of the economic lives of the people was central to the establishment of the school.

Expressing their views on the negative effects of the large proportion of time devoted to literary instruction at the Mampong Junior Trade School in the early 1930s, the Chiefs of Ejisu and Kumasi provided instructive comments relating to the economic reasons for the promotion of TVE in the School. The Chief of Ejisu, for example, indicated that "the present large numbers of unemployed in this country are mostly clerks" and that providing the youth with vocational skills was the way forward (District Commissioner's Office, Kumasi 1934). The chief of Kumasi also suggested that more time be spent on handicrafts than literary subjects "so as to make the pupils efficient and competent artisans" (District Commissioner's Office, Kumasi 1934). In 1934, the District Commissioner of Asante Mampong underscored the economic reasons as the motivation for the people sending their children to the Mampong Middle Boarding School (which used to be the Junior Trade School) when he intimated that "there appears to be general disinclination to sending the boys to the school unless employment is guaranteed on passing out" (District Commissioner's Office, Asante Mampong, 1934). During the same period, the District Commissioner of Juaso, Asante-Akim, said that after speaking to "one or two people and to one ex-Trade boys" of Asante Mampong Middle Boarding School, they indicated their happiness over the practical work at the school. (Acting District Commissioner, Juaso, Asante Akim, 1934). In a letter dated 25 April 1934, to the Chief Commissioner in Kumasi, the Acting District Commissioner of Juaso wrote that "ex-Trade boy was proud of the fact that he had a Seventh Standard Certificate in addition to his certificate as regards his practical work" (Acting District Commissioner, Juaso, Asante Akim, 1934). Certainly, the "ex-Trade boy" was proud because of the fact he could get employment because of the practical work he had done at school.

The Bekwai Arts and Crafts Centre, which was established in the 1940s under the British colonial government, was also aimed at equipping the youth with practical and vocational skills for productive economic lives in future (Bekwai United Art and Crafts Centre, 1943). The curricula of the Centre, comprising drawing, painting, ceramics, and textiles, traditional

weaving, mat weaving and basketry were focused on making the pupils economically self-dependent after completing middle school. (Bekwai United Art and Crafts Centre, 1943). A sub-chief of Asante Bekwai, Nana Osei Yaw II (Dabehene), and Mr Edward Amponsah, who were products of the Bekwai Craft Centre in the early 1950s, emphasised the fact that they acquired some basic economic skills in areas such as painting, cane work and cloth weaving and some of their colleagues got employment as Craft instructors in the 1970s when the Continuation School System, which emphasised acquisition of practical skills available in the community, was introduced in the 1970s (Osei, 2014; Amponsah, 2014).

The Artisan Training Scheme was launched in colonial Ghana in 1952 to promote collaboration and consultation with the Colonial Office and U K Ministry of Labour for the awarding of scholarships and sponsorships to train artisans and tradesmen in the United Kingdom. Under the scheme, the following artisans and their areas of expertise as indicated below were trained in Britain: Bakers-5, Laundrymen-3, Watch Repairers-3, Potters-6, Painters-4, Typewriter Mechanics-4, Tailors-5, Dressmakers-2, Masons-4, Carpentars-6, Shoemakers-4, Brick and Tile Makers-4, Upholsterers-1, Turners-7, Electricians-13, Cabinet Makers-4, Welders-3, Fitters-14, Printers-7, Blacksmiths-6 (Haizel, 1991: 66-67).

In 1954, a Girls' Vocational Training Centre was established in Cape Coast, the Central regional capital, and there was no doubt that the main rationale for its establishment was economic. The Centre aimed at training the girls in "useful crafts and home craft" to equip them with practical skills for productive lives in future (PRAAD.CR.Ra1/4/19, 1955). Explaining on the rationale for Vocational Training Centres in the country, the Minister of Education, in September 1954, when opening a similar vocational training Centre at Christiansburg, Accra, noted that such training centres are "intended to give informal useful training on a practical level to unemployed young women whose lack of useful occupation would otherwise create a serious social problem" (PRAAD.CR.Ra1/4/19, 1955). This observation by the Minister is, undoubtedly, an unequivocal expression of the economic motive for the establishment of TVE institutions in the country and the implied connection between economic development and people's behaviour. From the above discussions, it is obvious that the provision of TVE was primarily underpinned by the quest to provide relevant employable skills for productive living.

2.8 Lessons and implications for contemporary Ghanaian society

From the discussions, it is obvious that economic reasons largely facilitated the provision of TVE in the Gold Coast. There was no doubt that the priority of both the Christian mission and the colonial administration as well as the 'apprentice' government of Dr Kwame Nkrumah during the period was to give attention to TVE. This was due to its overwhelming potential for economic development of the Gold Coast society. Judging from the data presented above and the general psychological set of the people during the period, one would say that the people had largely recognised that TVE was one of the most effective antidotes for accelerated economic growth and increased prosperity for the people. This recognition has still persisted among virtually all stakeholders in the provision of TVE education in the country, even long after the attainment of independence. It is also gratifying to note that at the meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 29-30 May 2007, three strategic objectives of TVE and Training in Africa were laid down as captured in the executive summary of "Strategy to Revitalise Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Africa (Final Draft)" (African Union, 2007). In sum, these objectives

focused on the provision of a modernised TVE and Training in Africa to provide the youth with the requisite skills and competencies to make employment easily accessible. Moreover, such an education is to be used as a vehicle for regional cooperation and socio-economic development through the mobilisation of all stakeholders for the renewal and harmonisation of TVE and Training policies, programmes and strategies in Africa. Akyeampong (2007) also points out that Ghana has always identified and prioritised TVE as the sector for providing its middle-level manpower base for accelerated development. The study by Pongo *et al*. (2014) also points to the fact that acquisition of employable skills, poverty reduction and wealth creation are the fruits of the effective provision of technical and vocational training in Africa.

It is also obvious from the discussions that practical methods such as provisions of equipment, technical/vocational schools, curricular innovations, experimental farms, and scholarships were put in place during the period to ensure that TVE education was provided in different form to cater for the economic needs of the Gold Coast.

Notwithstanding these audacious efforts during the missionary and colonial periods, one can say that, to a large extent, the economic rationale of TVE has still not been realised in contemporary Ghanaian society. Graduates from TVE institutions, optimistically, continue to nurture the hope that they could either be employed or create their own jobs to accumulate adequate capital/resources for their future livelihoods, but this vision has too often not been materialised. People still live in abject poverty and are generally disillusioned. Unemployment has sky-rocketed with time. Rural-urban drift is on the ascendency. Almost every essential commodity in the country is imported and TVE institutions are largely a pale shadow of themselves; sometimes "crying" for basic tools and infrastructure. Members of the society, including TVE graduates, are mere "spectators" of vigorous global industrial activities and largely stand ready to consume anything from anywhere, irrespective of its dire economic implications. It is not uncommon to find a graduate from a university, with even with master's and PhD degrees in TVE, travelling to European markets to buy goods, including toothpicks, toilet rolls, detergents, perfumes, mobile phones, or fabrics to sell in Ghana. This unwholesome economic phenomenon is frequently considered as prestigious! Successive governments seem to have fallen prey to this phenomenon which I refer to as "economic slavery" and have allowed an unbridled importation of all kinds of shoddy goods into the country. Why not? They have, somehow, failed to create the enabling environment for the productive sector, all in the name of lack of funds.

It appears that those TVE institutions that remain popular today are those that concurrently promote academic education particularly business-related programmes. For example, in 2011, 1 331 students graduated in various areas of specialisation at the Sunyani Polytechnic. Out of this number, 311 students offered various courses in a purely technical/technological and vocational (practically oriented) courses representing 23.37%. The remaining 1 020 students graduated in business-related courses, constituting 76.63%. (Sunyani Polytechnic, 2013). The picture at the Kumasi Polytechnic provides virtually the same trend. The statistics are as follows: In the 2011/2012 academic year, the Polytechnic awarded bachelor's degrees to 424 students who pursued courses in the following areas: Building Technology, Accountancy, and Civil Engineering. Out of this number, 23 offered Building Technology, representing 5.4%, twenty-eight (28) offered Civil Engineering, representing 6.60%, and 373 offered Accountancy, representing 87.97%. At the Higher

National Diploma (HND) level, the Business and Management Faculty has four departments, which graduated 3 570 students in various business-related courses in the 2011/2012 academic year. The Engineering Faculty, which has seven departments, graduated 877 students at the same time at the same institution (Kumasi Polytechnic, 2013). The recent statistics of the same institution, which has been transformed into a technical university, do not provide any optimistic outlook for the provision of purely technical/engineering programmes. In the 2021/2022 academic year, the total number that graduated in Higher National Diploma (HND) Accounting with Computer was 224. In the same year, students who graduated in HND Mechanical Engineering (Automotive option) were 36 (Kumasi Technical University, 2021/2022). The whooping gap, among other things, tells a lot about the Ghanaian attitude towards technical programmes.

The pertinent question is: Why did we begin quite well but ended so badly? One of the lessons that could be drawn from this complex paradox is the creation of confidence in the students of TVE institutions to nib in the bud the phenomenon of an inferiority complex. Culturally, the average Ghanaian has had the notion all along that schooling is synonymous with literary/academic education, so any form of schooling that promoted anything apart from such programmes were looked down upon. Apart from an inferiority complex, these graduates have been unable to create their own jobs to a large extent and therefore rely on the government for jobs. Given the operations of civil and public services of modern governance, the preference for 'academic /literary' graduates to work in such services/units / departments would realistically be greater than the preference graduates with TVE certificates.

Inadequate numbers of industries and factories in the country over the period also has also made it difficult to achieve the economic aims of TVE. What is the use of TVE training when, after leaving school, the students, who were already impoverished, do not have jobs, and are left to fend for themselves with very slim chances of getting somewhere to put their expertise into practice?

This challenge is further complicated by a lack of foundational capital or seed monies to enable the graduates to start their own jobs. Those who are lucky to get such monies to start their own businesses may also experience a volatile economic environment that could destroy their ventures. Merely eulogising the benefits of TVE and even creating some infrastructure to provide such education, as done within the period, were not enough for the full realisation of the economic reasons for the establishment. Such TVE activities could justly be described as *micro*-attempts to realise the economic goals of the individual and the society.

The macro measures which focus on the provision of regular and well-coordinated financial incentives to TVE graduate to start their own businesses, the setting up of cottage and rural industries, and the systematic and regular provision of scholarships to those who go for TVE are urgently needed to deal with the numerous challenges that confront the provision of TVE in modern Ghana. In addition, educational policy makers and political leaders have crucial transformational roles in forging mutual relationships among key stakeholders including students to expand the curriculum of TVE institutions to be inclusive of entrepreneurial education. This, among other things, would sharpen the skills of students to be innovative and resourceful in creating their own jobs to reduce the burden of government.

3. Conclusion

The above discussions clearly portray that during the colonial period, the indigenous people had a well-articulated and clearly delineated rationale for the provision and practice of TVE. What it therefore meant was that the recognition of TVE as having the capacity for social amelioration and economic prosperity was never underestimated during the colonial era. Both the colonists and the colonised appreciated the economic rationale for such an education and consequently promoted the provision and delivery of such an educational programme. However, it is significant to emphasise the fact that merely putting practical measures at the micro-programmes (school-based) in place is not enough to realise the economic goals of TVE in the country. What should, however, be done is to embark on macro-level policies (broader national policies) such as the creation of jobs through the systematic establishment of cottage/rural industries and the creation of credit facilities for the graduates of TVE to complement the micro-efforts of providing training for pupils and students to achieve greater efficiency and success.

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