

TVET History and Reform

The Case of Palestine

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Abstract *This paper explores and analyses the evolution of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Palestine since 1860 and critically reflects on the main differences and changes of traditional and current TVET. Some of the initial differences include: (1) TVET goals and objectives and (2) approaches to connect learners with the real world of work. Exploring TVET reform will illustrate the regression of its current model concerning quality, relevance and responsiveness. The article is seeking to provide a deeper understanding of TVET development and changes throughout history through a critical sociological theory lens. It will also reflect on the current conditions in Palestine under the social, cultural, political and economic systems that have been affecting the TVET system and students' vocational choices vs. academic choices.*

Title *TVET History and Reform. The Case of Palestine*

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1 Introduction

Due to its vocational nature and being inherently tied to a specific trade or occupation, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is traditionally a non-academic approach to learning. Accordingly, the objective of TVET is to teach skills, knowledge and attitudes that relate to a certain profession and create employment opportunities and enhance motivation and competitiveness for advanced skills and creativity in the workplace (Mintrom, 2014). TVET objectives also involve providing the market with trained and skilled workers, or qualified technicians and practitioners who are able to contribute to social and economic development and respond to the changes in the labour market. This is achieved by offering a special training programme with a focus on practical and

applicable skills in order students to subsequently obtain a permanent job in a specific trade (Sulaiman, Yunus, & Ahmad, 2019). This is the reason experiential and self-regulated learning was one of the main features and characteristics of traditional forms of TVET. Learning was simply not limited to attending classes or lectures guided by teachers. Alternatively, the concept of learning tells us that “deep, lasting, independent learning requires a range of activities – cognitive, affective and even physical – that go far beyond reading and listening” (Nilson, 2013, p. 4).

Traditional TVET was able to provide the market with semiskilled, skilled and craftworkers. Learning a vocation was considered a necessity not only for a stable long-term job but also for life-long learning. The term “lifelong learning encompasses all learning activities undertaken throughout life for the development of competencies and qualifications” (Aggarwal, 2005, p. 34). This is not only relevant for a lifetime job, however, this life-long learning was combined with experiential learning and depends on individuals to seek further and advanced skills, competencies and knowledge. Traditional TVET responded to the needs and requirements of the community, while the current TVET has been under the pressure of the current implementation of education policies that deviate TVET institutes from the direction that achieves goals. Thus, traditional TVET communities experienced economic and social prosperity more than current communities.

The methods of traditional TVET focussed on professional and personal competencies including (but not limited to) communication, problem-solving, self-motivation, work ethics, discipline and entrepreneurial skills. It was a comprehensive and holistic approach that consisted of a number of variables that influence learning (Panadero, 2017). Teachers of the traditional form were also trained in specifically how to teach as well as how one learns and acquires new skills. Life-long and experiential learning was not only limited to the students but also to teachers who were learning side by side with their students as part of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL). “SRL is a constant goal for everyone, including both teachers and students” (Harding, 2018, p. 6). The acquisition of skills and competencies requires both the teacher and learner to develop strategies for teaching and learning respectively in order to be able to think critically, reflect and learn new knowledge and skills to achieve the learning objectives with quality output.

Developing and enhancing professional and personal competencies is one of the most important issues for policymakers and TVET stakeholders as part of achieving the collective TVET goals and objectives (Brewer & Comyn, 2015). Their overall objective is to contribute to social and economic development and be able to respond to any changes in the labour market by equipping qualified and competent manpower. More specifically, there are certain objectives for each level of TVET according to the classification (or rather, the level) of their institutes (Samara, 2016). For example, the objective of TVET training institutes is to train and provide the market with semi-skilled workers (level 1), while the objective of TVET secondary schools is to equip and provide the market with skilled and craftsmen (level 2 and level 3) and the objective of the technical colleges is to equip and provide the market with technicians and experts (level 4 and level 5; see Table 1). This is why it is important to define the objectives of each level and work practically to meet these objectives.

In Palestine, the current stage of TVET, especially secondary vocational schools, aims to primarily prepare their students for higher education. However, this aim directly con-

tradicts their stated objectives of preparing skilled graduates for the market. In addition to this, there have been numerous global challenges affecting the labour market, including newly emerging industries and globalisation leading to drastic changes to older working methods. Meanwhile, these changes are also coupled with a global economic recession and an increasing unemployment rate (Comyn, 2018). These factors have all contributed to an increase in a skills mismatch between education and the market. The main consequence of this is the inability of learners to find opportunities for Work-Based Learning (WBL) which allows for the acquisition of professional practical skills, competencies and attitudes in a real-world work environment. WBL is described as being used in vocational education and training “to develop basic work habits, occupational identity and specific occupational competencies” (Sweet, 2013, p. 170). Thus, practical skills and competencies are necessary to bridge the gap between education and the market and help to avoid the consequences of skills mismatch

Besides the current higher-education focussed system, the lack of efficient and successful work-based learning (WBL) practices and methodologies or the unsystematic WBL practices and activities (Samara, 2021a) persist due to a lack of a goal-oriented system; TVET system is failing to achieve their goals by not providing the market with skilled workers, crafts and technicians, especially graduates of secondary vocational schools and vocational colleges. The local and national industries are in high demand for qualified skilled workers and craftspeople who are supposed to be TVET graduates. Instead, there is an increasing gap between the needs of the market and the majors offered in TVET institutes. The results of a study prepared by the Palestinian Policy Research Institute (MAS) entitled “Skills shortages and gaps in the industrial sector in the occupied Palestinian territories” emphasised the scarcity of skilled workers due to the lack of necessary skills and experience and the lack of the required specialisations in the education institutions and this presents the most prominent obstacles to the development of the industrial sector in Palestine (Al-Ayyam Newspaper, 2019).

In the last 20 years, the shortage of skilled labour has become a major challenge facing numerous traditional industrial and vocational sectors in Palestine, which has even led some employers to halt production lines in their enterprises. Despite the high unemployment rates, there is a severe shortage of skilled labour workers particularly in the field of technology and machine maintenance and operational qualifications due to the lack of majors in TVET institutes that meet the market demand and due to the lack of workers who prefer to join the regional markets seeking better opportunities and higher salaries. Additionally, there is a lack of communication between employers and TVET graduates without a stringent employment agency or tool to support this communication. This causes great economic and industrial losses, often then leading to the closure of several factories and thousands of workshops. This in turn has raised fears among entrepreneurs about the future of the remaining working businesses and industries (Amr, 2021). One of the strategic approaches therefore strengthens TVET and skill development within a framework of lifelong learning (Comyn, 2018), open majors in TVET institutes that meet the market and industry demand for required knowledge and skills, work to improve communication and relationships between employers and TVET institutes and qualify TVET personal to be familiar with technological developments in the industrial sector.

Furthermore, in times of ongoing crisis in Palestine, education and the economy, one can see further setbacks. In any practical profession, WBL is crucial in the learning process in order to see a practical application of the skills required for the job. However, when the opportunities for WBL are limited, for instance in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic where most learning was transitioned to a remote setting, it became almost impossible to meaningfully teach practical professional skills (Samara, 2021b). As teaching was still being developed remotely, the need for experiential and self-learning became even more critical. Therefore, current economic crises are a call to awaken governments and individuals to the importance of changing the nature of TVET programmes and adopting teaching and learning methodologies to address the challenges and be able to prepare education programmes focusing on immediate youth employment. This cannot be achieved without considering the need for sustainable WBL forms that can manage economic crises or are adequately supported so they can be maintained as a learning methodology and strategy for teachers and learners to equip learners with life-long learning skills and 21st-century skills to boost learners' innovation, creativity and critical and reflective thinking (Bell, 2010).

2 Methodology

This paper uses sociological theory (Akanle & Olutayo, 2021) by providing a deeper understanding and explanation for the traditional and current TVET system changes and reform in Palestine. This will explore and analyse social, cultural, political and economic perspectives and changes that exist in the community (Thompson, 2017). This paper explores and analyses the popular perception of TVET in Palestinian society and therefore seeks to offer insights to transform individuals and communities from a certain perception of disempowerment (Douglas, 2003).

The primary data were collected from main TVET stakeholders including representatives from the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Labour (MoL), the private sector and sociology experts. The study mainly used in-depth interviews to collect the necessary data to help understand the reasons for the changes that took place in traditional vocational education through understanding the current situation of TVET, policies, education objectives and stakeholders' and learners' perspectives and experiences. In-depth interviews were also conducted with TVET students, TVET graduates and their parents.

As secondary data collection, there was a bibliographical analysis of varied resources such as books, journals, online newspaper articles, and online news reports on the history and development of TVET. This also included an analysis of TVET strategies and policies.

This paper consists of eight sections. Section One introduces the study and its surrounding context. Section Two outlines the paper's methodology and tools. Section Three introduces the history of TVET in Palestine since 1860 followed by Section Four which covers the current classification of TVET Institutes in Palestine. Subsequently, in Section Five, the paper introduces the political development in Palestine since 1948 and Its Impact on TVET. Section Six presents the social-cultural perception towards TVET in Palestine. A final section before the conclusion addresses TVET development from 2011–2023.

This study took place in Palestine in 2023. All the interviews and data were conducted, collected and analysed before the war events took place on October 7, 2023. In July 2019, Palestine was recognized as a state by 138 of the 193 UN Member States. However, many countries do not recognize Palestine as a state (Roth, 2023).

3 History of TVET in Palestine

Traditional TVET in Palestine was first introduced in 1860 when the Ottoman Empire allowed foreigners to establish schools. The German teacher Johann Ludwig Schneller established the first vocational school in Palestine and called it the Syrian Orphanage (in German: *Syrisches Waisenhaus*) (Zachs, 2019). The school aimed at addressing the needs of individuals and communities and started providing vocational training to hundreds of orphaned, refugees and needy children to teach them practical vocational skills and competencies to enable them to acquire a profession to earn income and eventually be able to support themselves. Their training programmes were limited to vocational traditional professions such as sewing, shoemaking and pottery. After that, in 1863 the Salesian School was established in Bethlehem as a vocational school to achieve comparable goals to the Syrian Orphanage. During the British Mandate, the Islamic Orphanage was established in Jerusalem in 1922 as an industrial school to help orphans and the needy provide a decent life by training for a specific profession. The Khadoori Agricultural School was established in 1930 in Tulkarm, to train other students who had completed primary school on the general farming method and agricultural education for a period of two academic years, which became three years in 1943 and the graduates returned, as successful farmers, to work in their villages and train other citizens (Sabella, 1983). In 1933 the first government vocational school was established in Haifa. The first training centre was established in Jerusalem in 1948. Then, it was transferred to Beit Hanina in 1964. Most of the students enrolled in this centre were orphans and children of poor families and refugees (Busailah, 2018). Since 1958, during Jordanian rule, the TVET system covered the secondary education stage and the higher education stage under the Jordanian Ministry of Education, where the government and UNRWA established a number of vocational schools, vocational training centres and community colleges especially to support refugees who live in the camps (Hilal, 2019).

As described above, the traditional TVET system was able to provide the market with semi-skilled, skilled and crafts workers. Over time, these traditional professions had seen prosperity. Thus, shops selling clothes, leathers and shoes were increasing and expanding in all Palestinian cities to serve the local market, having the capacity to employ more people than after years these shops expanded to become factories in some cities and started to employ hundreds of workers and producing and filling the local markets with high-quality local products (Tomizy, 2015).

Families used to be named after their profession and the profession became a profession for the whole family and inherited from one generation to another. This inheritance did not only include professional skills but also included interpersonal skills that the learners were learning while travelling for the purpose of learning new skills and meeting with new people of the same profession (Bazzi, 2011). Palestinian society knew and

recognised families under the names of their job such as the tailor family, عائلة الخياط, the carpenter family, عائلة النجار, the blacksmith family, عائلة الحداد, (Saraya Agency News, 2018). Furthermore, in every village, several women learned vocational professions and were working and running their own individual workshops in their homes, owning their sewing machines and knitting. These women used to sew clothes for all the villagers around and would then pass these skills on to other girls who showed the desire to learn the profession.

WBL for traditional TVET was informal through experiential and self-regulated learning. Students who completed their studies at school were sent to another neighbouring country to develop other alternative new skills, knowledge and competencies, not necessarily available locally. In this example, learners from Palestine would visit neighbouring Arab Countries such as Egypt, Syria and Iraq for self-regulated and experiential learning to learn a certain profession (Bazzi, 2011). Upon their return, they would assist in teaching their fellow students by hosting workshops and learning sessions to share what they have gained from their experience related to that vocation. Teachers would then observe students' individual skills, personal characteristics and motivations to assist in guiding them to a vocational profession that suits them. Teachers and students were aware of the nature of the job and what kind of skills and competencies were required. Experiential and self-regulated learning was allowed to flourish because students and learners had personal motivation, critical thinking, investigation and travel for knowledge.

This way of learning is explained in the six propositions of experiential learning theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2008). The experiential learning process is based on a cycle that consists of four stages (Ord, 2012). However, vocational learners in Palestine were going through different stages of learning which are :

- Learning the profession
- Travel to gain more professional and personal skills- individual motivation
- Return to share and reflect on their experience
- Teaching others who are learners in the workshop
- Expand their work and profession in a more creative way and in a more skilled and professional way to become teachers for other learners.

TVET institutes played an important role in the local market and for the local community. The vocational school was considered the main provider for skilled and crafts workers who were working in the shops and factories of the traditional majors. Students were graduating with adequate skills and knowledge about their profession and were ready to make the transition from school to work immediately after graduation, gaining advanced professional and personal skills and then starting their own workshops and private business. Students were developing advanced professional and personal skills individually, driven by their motivation and desire to learn the profession.

In the 80s, the industrial and vocational enterprises between small and medium enterprises (S/ME) were the most widespread. Palestine was renowned for a variety of products such as among others shoes, stone, soap and glass. For these traditional professions, Palestine used to have thousands of factories and shops but have been

the most affected by the crises of skilled workers shortage. Only in Hebron city, these factories employed more than 1,800 workers, constituting 39 % of the total workforce in the field of industry in Hebron. Its production covers the entire Palestinian market and a large part of the Israeli market (Amr, 2021).

4 Current Classification of TVET Institutes in Palestine

In Palestine, there are three main classifications for TVET institutes. The classification depends on (1) the objective of the institute; (2) students' qualifications and academic achievement in grade 10 (student age is 16) and if they pass it or not and (3) the social status of the learner as a refugee, orphan, widows, family status or gender (for differences, see table 1) (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2012).

4.1 The Formal Institutes

The formal TVET institutes in Palestine are considered and affiliated with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and include:

(1) Upper Secondary vocational schools (student age is 16 to 18) that qualify and provide the market with skilled and craft workers of level 2 and level 3 (see Figure 1). These schools focus on preparing students for work on the one hand and joining community and technical colleges and universities on the other hand. Students in these schools spend half of their studies studying general subjects and the second half students join practical training in the profession. To be accepted into these schools, students must successfully pass the tenth grade and then attend the school for two years. After graduation, students take the high school exam for the vocational stream and if they pass, they obtain the high school certificate for the vocational stream, which qualifies them to enrol in community colleges or in the university according to their major and profession in the school.

(2) Community colleges and technical colleges that graduate and provide the market with technicians and experts of level 4 and level 5 (see Figure 1). To join these colleges students must pass the high school exam successfully. Students study for two years and then they can also join universities if they pass a final comprehensive exam.

4.2 The Non-Formal Learning Institutes

The non-formal TVET institutes are the vocational training institutes and training centres such as the vocational training centres that are affiliated with the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) and the Chamber of Commerce as the main providers. There are other organisations that also provide the community and learners with vocational training programmes and courses which some of them are affiliated with the private sector. Non-formal means that the provided vocational training, courses and programmes have different durations that extend from five months to two years, courses do not have a predetermined curriculum, and there are no minimum qualifications for learners who want to join the courses. Ad-

ditionally, learners are granted recognized certificates by the MoL but are not recognised by the MoE. Thus, learners and graduates cannot join higher academic education. Such non-formal vocational training courses are linked to certain defined objectives, curricula and qualifications. However, these programs are not connected to the educational system that is considered formal.

These vocational training centres qualify learners to be in level 1 of TVET which is semi-skilled workers (see table 1). With the Ministry of Labor (MoL), the duration of the training courses ranges from five to 14 months depending on the type of course and training objectives. Upon completion of the course, the student receives a course certificate from the Ministry of Labour. With the UNRWA, the duration of the training courses ranges from one to two years. After students complete the training, they receive a diploma in the profession for which they were trained.

Table 1: Classifications of TVET Institutes

Classifications of TVET Institutes			
Name	Vocational training institutes	Vocational secondary schools	Vocational colleges
Level	Level 1	Level 2&3	Level 4&5
Objectives/graduates	semi-skilled workers	skilled and craftsman	technicians and experts
Students who can join	Finish 9 th grade (above 15 years old)	Finish 10 th grade (above 16 years old)	Finish high school (above 18 years old)
Higher education possibilities	Students cannot join colleges or universities	Students can join colleges and universities	Students can join universities
Ministry affiliated with	– Ministry of Labour (MoL) – Ministry of Social Affairs – UNRWA – Chamber of Commerce – Other private employers	Ministry of Education (MoE)	Ministry of Education (MoE)

5 Political Development in Palestine since 1948 and Its Impact on TVET

Since 1948, the education system in Palestine has been controlled by Israeli policies (Mahamid, 2017). According to Abu-Saad (2006), Palestinians had limited access to schools and studies such as vocational, agricultural and scientific studies with limited participation in education policy-making, access to resources, education materials, freedom of movement for education and international cooperation.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was formed in 1994 and in 1996 Palestine achieved autonomy. As a result, the PNA took control back of the education system represented in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoE&HE) including TVET system and policies (Dana & Jarbawi, 2022). From 1995 to 1996, under the National Strategy, the MoE&HE implemented reform on the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system. In 1998, the MoE&HE created the National TVET Strategy for TVET reform (GIZ, 2010). This strategy was developed with the involvement of the private sector and the Ministry of Labour (MoL) as main partners. The national TVET Strategy aimed to create a Palestinian TVET system that is efficient, effective, flexible and linked to the needs of the labour market and available to all groups, in a way that achieves justice (Nicolai, 2007). From 2000 to 2005, the National TVET Strategy was not implemented due to the start of the second uprising that resulted in worsening of the political situation due to the Israeli military attack on Palestine (Lin, 2021).

In 2000 the second Intifada (uprising) started, once again due to the military attacks that destroyed the infrastructure of the government headquarters including ministries (Lin, 2021). This lasted until 2006 until the legislative elections were held. In 2006, Hamas won the elections and their new government was formed with new policies (Brown, 2010). The international powers boycotted the new government and stopped all international financial support in an attempt to force Hamas to leave the government (Nicolai, 2007). An inner conflict started between the two main political parties Hamas and Fath. Since then, Palestine started to have two governments, one in the West Bank (Fatah) and one in the Gaza Strip (Hamas) (Brown, 2010). These political crises affected the implementation of the National TVET Strategy. However, concerning education and TVET, the West Bank and Gaza remained working under the same TVET policy and the same MoE&HE. After that, in 2006, MoE&HE created a Revised TVET Strategy that was issued in 2011 (GIZ, 2010).

Political stability in any country is important for social and economic stability and development (Pastore & Zimmermann, 2019). The political situation that Palestine has been going through is affecting the TVET system development. This includes many issues among others TVET policy implementation, School to Work (STW) Transition and the cooperation and engagement with employers and with the private sector. It also affects employers themselves, their business sustainability and their capacity to offer places for Work Based Learning (WBL) for TVET students and graduates (Sayre, 2017). The political crises and their negative implications and consequences have been creating a continuous situation of uncertainty and causing the absence of sound development projects by the government and thus limited the capacity of all TVET stakeholders, partners and TVET institutes at all levels (General Union of Palestinian Economists, 2018).

6 Social-Cultural Perception Towards TVET in Palestine

The existing inferiority of the majority of people in Palestine towards TVET and the lack of awareness of TVET's importance for social and economic development encourage individuals to measure their achievement-based academia rather than developing their practical skills (Al-Shalabi, 2019). This has originated from the governing system partic-

ularly the education system that affects individual behaviours including their relationship with a job and their way of considering education and acquiring skills and competencies (Ivković, 1999). This perception and understanding of TVET and its graduates as inferior prevent people from recognising its importance and impact, especially graduates of TVET skilled workers of level 2 and level 3 (see Figure 1) for social and economic development in the market through its creation of skilled and crafts workers. The result is that the markets in Palestine become sparse of many professional and skilled workers which creates an imbalance in the labour market and the industrial sector in Palestine (Al-Ayyam Newspaper, 2019).

Additionally, the prevailing trend of parents supporting their children to pursue academic studies after they graduate from TVET institutes is to seek social status for their children and to seek an employee with the government with a permanent salary (Al-Shalabi, 2019). This behaviour has also affected individual attitudes toward learning from experiential learning work to seeking a job for life and salary by flowing to the cities, adopting a new lifestyle heading towards academic education and seeking academic certifications rather than seeking a profession (Samara, 2022). This, in a way, has made people being identified as consumers more than producers. People are not aware that they are being exploited in the name of education at a time when the education system is business-driven (Samkange, 2015). People started to become accustomed to and become dependent on this model of easy and cheap exports from countries such as China and Turkey (Al-Deek, 2016).

This social lifestyle has prevented people from being more independent and prosperous individuals by not understanding their circumstances and not taking action to make a change and being able to choose what empowers their social and economic life (Kantzara, 2012).

7 TVET Development From 2011-2023

The TVET system in Palestine has been suffering from numerous challenges, including a fragmented TVET system going unaddressed among a number of ministries, the absence of participation from both the private sector and civil society, the lack of qualified staff and the absence of a Palestinian law concerning TVET legislation (Nicolai, 2007). Furthermore, there is a decrease in the rate of youth interest in TVET and enrolment due to a culture of preference for academic education over TVET programmes in Palestinian society. This preference persists as a result of the belief that academic education opens possibilities for better jobs, higher salaries and a recognised social value in the community for individuals. In other words, due to the popular understanding of inferiority associated with TVET students and graduates and the lack of awareness of parents and students of the importance of these specialisations and their areas of work in providing future opportunities (Daraghma, 2020).

Additionally, according to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, there is a significantly increasing rate of unemployment among academic graduates (MoE&HE, 2017). The Palestinian labour market suffers from a weakness in its absorptive capacity for the number of graduates from higher education institutions, as a result of their fail-

ure to align educational output with what the local market demands. This is due to an overemphasis and focus on theoretical and cognitive curricula away from practical programmes and training.

In light of the above situation, reform was a necessity to address these challenges and work to eliminate them. The reform for TVET began in 1996 and resulted in many changes. According to the TVET reform strategy, all TVET elements that required reform were addressed (GIZ, 2010). Curricula were changed concerning their content, objectives and teaching and learning methodologies. This consisted of new policies in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) that were developed to enhance partnerships with the private sector and thus bridge the skill gap between students and the market in order to facilitate employment (Samara, 2016).

Furthermore, more schools were opened and girls have been included in new and old existing majors after years of exclusion from joining vocational majors in TVET schools, in specific vocational secondary schools. Accordingly, the number of students and majors has increased in response to the rapid market change and the emergence of new industries such as smart buildings and renewable energy.

The new majors have been failing, however, to equip their graduates with the necessary skills due to the lack of efficient implementation that could achieve the intended learning objectives. TVET institutes' education output still remains unaligned with TVET policy and strategy objectives (GIZ, 2010). Besides, the newly opened majors in the schools have been encouraging, preparing and directing students to pursue higher academic education, particularly in engineering instead of focusing on empowering their professional skills to engage directly in the market. This creates a real crisis in the TVET system and hinders TVET from achieving its objective and thus increasing unemployment. In 2018 according to an interview with a representative of the Engineers Syndicate in the West Bank, there has been a significant increase in engineer graduates reaching 20,400 engineers (Engineers Association, 2017). Currently, the universities accept graduates of TVET schools to join all engineering branches.

This means that TVET institutes started to attract students who aim to join the university and study academic majors. In most cases, academic majors at the university do not relate to what students study at the school. For example, most students can join any major at the university except for medicine and medical-affiliated colleges. This means that students lose the opportunity to build up on their skills and profession they gained from the school and lose the opportunity to work within the qualifications they gained from the vocational school. This has affected students and the local community's mindset and culture to perceive TVET as an academic path rather than a vocational opportunity that students can contribute to the social and economic development that TVET could bring to the community. With the reform policy, TVET has become education-oriented, not employment-oriented (Al-Shalabi, 2019). This also serves to explain the high rate of unemployment amongst youth according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in 2021, the unemployment rate for males in Palestine was 23 % compared to 42 % for females (PCBS, 2021). This doesn't serve the TVET objective of providing the market with skilled and professional workers.

When TVET secondary schools are no longer a provider of professional workers for the market and local enterprises, especially the traditional professions such as clothes

and shoe manufacturing, the whole market of supply changes concerning such industries. When traditional businesses collapse and close, something else will replace them to provide the market with products. The main consequence of this however is that globalisation became the solution by allowing lower-quality products from China and Turkey to fill the market (Al-Deek, 2016). This has led to the current domestic market in Palestine being largely dependent on imported products rather than producing local high-quality products. This has caused less demand for local products produced by local factories and enterprises that are run and working by hundreds of TVET skilled and craftworkers (Moussa, 2022). As a result, this has caused less demand of local industries for skilled, crafts and technicians in the labour market. This started to represent a serious challenge facing these professions and factories and threatened any possibilities of their expansion and development. Such factories included the plastic industry, glass industry, shoe industry as well as cloth and leather factories (Al-Ayyam Newspaper, 2019).

Concerning the changing of the TVET curriculum, the reform strategy in 2010 stated that this should include curriculum development methods and approaches of modern teaching and learning, emphasising integrating social and individual development and Lifelong Learning (LLL) (GIZ, 2010). However, the implementation of the new curriculum of teaching modules and competencies faced challenges that included teachers' qualifications to deliver the new approaches (Samara, 2018). Thus, the modified curriculum was unable to go side by side with the necessity for providing teachers with the necessary training to empower their skills to deliver the curriculum and be able to achieve the learning objectives. Besides, the reform was not a comprehensive preparation for all TVET personnel including teachers' training and students' preparation for the labour market. The reform, especially on the implementation side, did not include the conceptual perspectives that include cultural, professional, psychological, institutional and political perspectives (Samara, 2023a).

Part of the reform aimed at expanding and networking with local government and organisations to facilitate TVET governance and provide professional training for learners. For this reason, the Local Employment and TVET councils (LET) were established in each city in Palestine (Samara, 2023b).

In 2019, the Palestinian MoE started working to integrate vocational education with academic education in some schools to graduate competent and qualified students to meet the labour market and contribute to solving the problem of the increase in academic graduates. The programme aimed to integrate vocational education into the basic grades (from seventh to ninth grade) and was implemented to enhance the vocational concept among students of both genders, which works to refine their future vocational orientation. Additionally, the MoE has created vocational units for the secondary majors of technology, cosmetology and graphic design.

In 2019, the MoE in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour (MoL) started a new track for WBL which is the apprenticeship track for the first time in Palestine, WBL practices take the formal arrangements between three partners including the employer and the two ministries. The process involves a contract, salary and health insurance for the student. However, this is still limited to a few schools and a few majors in Palestine (Samara, 2021).

In 2020, the decision of the Council of Ministers was taken to establish the National Authority for Vocational and Technical Education and Training with the main responsibility of being the sole authority and entity who is responsible for drawing up the policies and laying down the necessary plans for enhancing and supervising the TVET system. Till this year 2023, the government is still addressing challenges and not taking any action plan or efficient implementation for the planned strategy to address the real problem practically. Without efficient implementation as a crucial element for a successful strategic plan, TVET institutes will not be able to achieve their objectives (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). The government attempts to write new strategies and policies, expand the network, change administrative institutes that represent TVET and start new initiatives or programmes in the excuse of new reform to achieve the objectives, yet, no concrete success in increasing the attractiveness of TVET system or increasing the community trust in the education output because according to the Ministry of Labour, the percentage of learners who join TVET programmes is 8 %, compared to 92 % for academic education (Ministry of Labour, 2021). Thus, reform must focus on the quality of the scale rather than focusing on the size of the scale and the quantity of increasing TVET schools' number or majors (Samara, 2023). Additionally, there is no importance or prioritisation shown by the government for developing, qualifying and preparing human resources in TVET education as a first step before opening any new school, programme, unit or major. There has been no adequate attention and investment in preparing qualified and competent TVET teachers. When this step is not taking any priority over all other elements, then there should be certain fears about the possibility of the success of TVET institutes in achieving their objectives. Because competent personnel is one of the main foundations for the success of implementing reform or facing any change in education. Thus, the staff must be empowered and motivated (Suciu, 2017).

8 Conclusion and Outlook

In the current economic, social and political crises in the world and in Palestine particularly, TVET is the only solution that can deal with and face challenges to reduce unemployment and respond to the rapid change because of globalisation, technology and emerging industries and the high rate of unemployment amongst academic education graduates. Bridging the gap is a necessity between the higher education academic institutes' business interests and the needs of society and individuals. TVET institutions must start to be goal-oriented to achieve their defined objectives for every level by developing and enhancing not only a strategic plan and policies but also a strategic implementation is required to achieve the objectives of every level (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). Knowing that the overall objective of all TVET levels is enhancing social and economic development. Every level must be addressed separately and an action plan must be prepared separately to enable a successful and focused implementation and steps. This will enable the TVET system to produce and provide the market with more competent skilled crafts and technicians for the market and will enhance individuals' and families' well-being and social and economic development by supporting and providing local enterprises and local professions with skilled force work.

Accordingly, critical and reflective thinking is needed to analyse and understand the factors of success for the future of TVET institutes in Palestine, their role in the market and how to rebuild a system that can contribute to local socioeconomic prosperity by meeting individuals' and communities' needs. Furthermore, cooperation is required between TVET policymakers and related institutes to define and regulate policies for acceptance either for universities or for the TVET institutes, particularly TVET secondary schools, to increase the quality of students and direct them to the field of their study in the school rather than pursuing another field in the academic studies.

For any reform in TVET, it must be comprehensive, not only in the planning phase but also in the implementation phase. Otherwise, all the ongoing suggested solutions of new strategies and policies for reform will remain theoretical without any practical results to improve and change the situation. In short, the scale of any reform will remain without quality (Reimers, Amaechi, Banerji, & Wang, 2022). Additionally, TVET practitioners and personnel must utilise international experiences in education and TVET reform strategies, implementation, theories, gaps and challenges and adopt useful practices for implementation within the available and possible resources and capabilities of the TVET institute and the country.

To conclude, TVET still suffers from a stereotypical societal view of inferiority, despite the interest and efforts of the government and numerous ministries in this sector and the continuous attempts for reform. This consideration of inferiority impacts the type of students who join TVET institutes and has been associated with poor academic achievement learners. This has increased the demand for academic education and the reluctance to join TVET institutes, especially TVET secondary schools. Ultimately, this has impacted the quality of vocational schools' outputs and the quality of the workforce.

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