

Youth Career Choice and TVET Sustainability in Malaysia: An Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Malaysian youths' career preferences towards Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and career preferences across the Realistic, Investigative, and Conventional (RIC) dimensions of Holland's vocational interest model, which are closely associated with TVET occupations. An experimental pre-test–post-test design was used to evaluate the effectiveness of a TVET awareness training module developed using the Behavioural Insights (BI) approach. The study involved 240 secondary school students aged 16 from eight schools in Malaysia. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, paired-samples t-tests, and Spearman's rank-order correlations were used to examine changes in TVET career preferences and self-efficacy, as well as the relationship between self-efficacy and TVET career choice. Before the intervention, participants demonstrated the highest preference for Conventional career interests. After the training, both TVET career preference scores and self-efficacy increased significantly, with the greatest improvement observed in the Realistic career dimension. Spearman's correlation analysis revealed weak but statistically significant positive relationships between self-efficacy and all RIC career dimensions in both the pre-test and post-test, indicating that higher self-efficacy was associated with greater interest in TVET-related careers. The findings suggest that Behavioural Insights-based TVET awareness training effectively enhanced self-efficacy and positively influenced youths' career preferences towards TVET. Nevertheless, the weak correlations indicate that self-efficacy is only one of several factors influencing career choice. Future research should examine additional determinants, such as career attitudes, parental influence, and social perceptions, to strengthen youth participation and support the long-term sustainability of TVET in Malaysia.

JEL Codes:

Keywords: TVET, Career choice, Self-efficacy, Youth, Behavioural Insights