

Customise TVET courses

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Malaysia has made substantial upgrades to its Technical and Vocational Education and Training programme. - NSTP file pic

LETTERS: THE Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector has played a central role in recent global economic reforms, with a discernible positive correlation between economic development and the demand for skilled workers evident in many developing countries.

To effectively prepare graduates for the dynamic job market, a nation's education system must adapt accordingly, and Malaysia is no exception as it undertakes substantial upgrades to its TVET system.

One challenge is that despite the transformative plans and budget allocations to enhance the TVET systems, lower secondary school students continue to opt for an academic degree. They are reluctant to pursue a vocational degree unless their academic results are poor.

Meanwhile, there is a noticeable shift among younger generations, showcasing a preference for short-term learning experiences driven by a desire to swiftly acquire practical skills, adapt to dynamic industries and fulfil specific needs while avoiding the protracted financial and time commitments associated with traditional higher education.

They aim to mitigate parents' financial constraints and high cost of living, which prompts a desire to swiftly enter the workforce.

Technical skills are becoming even more sought-after, thanks to the government's emphasis on TVET in the 2024 Budget. A significant amount has been reserved for trainees in the art, maritime, TVET Tahfiz programme, and aerospace maintenance, repair, and overhaul fields.

Furthermore, the government is introducing new courses within the Technical Education and Vocational Training framework, focusing on electric vehicles and solar energy.

This strategic move aims to propel youth into the burgeoning automobile industry, particularly in light of global advancements, with China leading the way in the transportation and EV markets.

While the introduction of new TVET programmes is a positive step, the current offerings are limited, with certain courses available in only specific states. For instance, the Piping Drafting (Oil & Gas) course is offered only in Malacca and Terengganu. The Creative Multimedia course is offered in Selangor.

While diversifying TVET programmes is commendable, there is a need to align course offerings with the evolving interests and demands of youth.

The creative industry, encompassing graphic design, multimedia, digital media production, web design and development, creative writing, content creation, visual effects and game development, has seen increasing interest among the youth.

Unfortunately, these courses are often accessible in private colleges with high fees, making them unaffordable for many, especially the B40 group.

It may be prudent to reassess the demographic distribution of the youth population in each state and tailor course offerings accordingly.

Addressing this gap would not only meet the aspirations of the youth but also prevent them from incurring additional financial burdens associated with relocating to other states for education.

Conducting thorough research in this regard is essential to ensure that government resources are used effectively and efficiently.

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The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Straits Times