



Assessment of 9-3-4 Policy Implementation and ... Akanbi, G. O. (2025)

Assessment of 9-3-4 policy implementation and students' enrolment in technical Colleges in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Educational policies are intended to serve as a blueprint for operations, and their implementation must be closely monitored to evaluate their effectiveness and relevance. One such policy is the transition from Junior Secondary school (JSS) to post-basic classes, which may be either into Senior Secondary (SS) school or Technical College (TC) as provided for in the National Policy on Education (NPE), section 3, paragraph 35 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). However, data from the six (6) TCs and enrolment data for secondary schools from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Oyo State, indicate very low TC enrolment relative to SS classes. Also, seeing young boys and girls who should be in school hawking on the streets and highways is concerning. This research, therefore, underscores the importance of refocusing on technical education in Oyo State. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining survey and historical research methods. Data on students' enrolment in SS and TCs were collected to examine the transition rate from the post-basic level to either senior secondary or TCs. The collected data were analyzed using simple frequency counts and percentages. The research recommends the effective implementation and monitoring of educational policies in Oyo State, particularly by promoting a technical-education mindset from the primary-school level.

Keywords: 9-3-4 Educational Policy, National Policy on Education, Technical Education, Enrolment

Introduction

In African societies, education of the head, heart, and hands was integral to traditional education. Every child was involved in hands-on skills acquired through the apprenticeship system, with functionalism as the main principle. No child was spared, as everyone contributed to the family's economic well-being. The introduction of Western education and an emphasis on literacy through reading, writing, and arithmetic (popularly known as the "three Rs") led to a decline in indigenous vocational education, which was replaced in schools by art and craft. Unfortunately, the missionaries who introduced Western education were not interested in Nigerians acquiring technical skills; they were more interested in recruiting individuals who could serve their interests as interpreters, cooks, dispatch riders, Catechists, housekeepers, etc. The missionaries dominated the education space until the colonial government began promulgating education ordinances in 1882, which continued until the regionalization of education in 1954, aimed at streamlining the missionaries' educational activities. By this time, Nigerians who have had the opportunity to be educated both at home and abroad have begun to criticize the irrelevance of missionary education in equipping recipients for self-reliance. All these developments led to the agitation for independence, which was eventually granted on October 1, 1960 (Akanbi & Jekayinfa, 2019). Nigerians thereafter assumed full responsibility for educational policy and content. The 1969 National Curriculum Conference (NCC) birthed the first Indigenous educational policy, the National Policy on Education (NPE), and the 6-3-3-4 system (6 years of primary, 3 years of junior secondary (JS), 3 years of senior secondary (SS) schooling and 4 years of higher education) (Adaralegbe, 1972). The 6-3-3-4 implies that after the three years of Junior Secondary, academically inclined students can move to the Senior Secondary, while others will move to a technical college or a trade centre for a 3-year post-basic vocational education in any field they desire, thereby living no one behind and stressing the importance of technical education for the teaming youth, and economic development of Nigeria, Oyo State inclusive. In October 1999, in furtherance of the significance of educational relevance, the Nigeria-UNESCO collaboration mission identified Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) as a priority area to underscore its essential role (Moja, 2000). This highlights the immense potential of technical education to empower young people and contribute to the economic development of a State and a nation. However, despite 25 years of designating Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) as a priority area to underscore its essential role, the situation in Oyo State does not reflect this, as students transitioning from junior secondary



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to senior secondary are far more numerous than those in technical colleges (TCs). Historically, the notion that the weak go to the TC has led to the TC losing substantial patronage. It should be noted that the four pillars of education evolved by UNESCO in 1996 – learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be (Sobe, 2022)- remain relevant in empowering the youth by engaging and equipping them to bring out their latent intellectual skills and use their native intelligence wisely. In line with Section 4, paragraph 20e of NPE 1977 edition, the defunct Western Region upgraded the Trade Centre in Oyo to a Technical College. It established GTC Igboora, GTC Ogbomoso, GTC Saki, and GTC Ibadan in 1979 and 1995, respectively. Oyo State has 626 public secondary schools and only five (5) TCs—0.80%. SSS enrolment from 2019 to 2024 is 663,000, and TCs for the same period are 11,638 (1.80%). Providing additional TCs is a fundamental issue that must be addressed to attract more students to TE. Therefore, this study examines the current state of technical education in Oyo State, focusing on enrollment in technical colleges, available courses, infrastructure, and the way forward.

Objectives of the study:

1. Appraise the transition rate from the junior secondary (JS) to the senior secondary (SS) and the TCs
2. State whether the Oyo State can be credited with adequately implementing the 9-3-4 education system
3. To examine the number of TCs available in Oyo State and to see if they are enough to implement the 9-3-4 education system effectively
4. To suggest what Oyo State can do to improve technical education

Research Questions:

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. What is the transition rate from the junior secondary (JS) to the senior secondary (SS) and the TCs?
2. Considering the enrolment in senior secondary and the TCs, can Oyo State be credited with adequately implementing the 9-3-4 education system?
3. Are the number of TCs available in Oyo State enough to implement the 9-3-4 education system effectively?
4. What can Oyo State do to improve technical education?

From 6-3-3-4 to 9-3-4: The Need to Focus on Technical Education

As previously stated, the outcome of the curriculum conference was the evolution of the NPE and the 6-3-3-4 system, both intended to enhance technical education and strengthen Nigeria's economy. To improve literacy levels in Nigeria, the 6-3-3-4 system was later upgraded to 9-3-4 in 2006 (Uwaifo et al., 2009). The 9-3-4 system was designed in conformity with MDGs and Education for All EFA, to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty as well as to stimulate and accelerate development, political consciousness, and national integration (Ukpong et. al., 2023). The '3' in the 9-3-4 system is referred to as Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PECD), which could be achieved by attending any of the following institutions: (i) Senior secondary schools, (ii) Technical colleges, (iii) Trade centres, (iv) Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEI), and (v) Vocational Enterprise Institutions (VEI). However, this study focuses solely on TCs in Oyo State, as the transition rate to TCs is too low to warrant urgent attention to technical education. The NPE also set the objectives of PECD, which are to: (i) Provide holders of the Basic Education Certificate and Junior Arabic and Islamic Studies Certificate with an opportunity for education at a higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background; (ii) Offers a diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, disposition, (iii) opportunities, and future roles; (iv) Provide a trained workforce in the applied sciences, technology, and commerce at the sub-professional grades; (v) Provide entrepreneurial, technical, and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance and agricultural, industrial, commercial, and economic development; (vi) Develop and promote the Nigerian language, art, and culture in the context of the world's cultural heritage; (vii) Inspire students to desire self-improvement and achieve excellence; (viii) foster patriotism, national unity, and security education with an emphasis on common ties despite our diversity; and (ix) Raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others, and appreciate the dignity of labour. (FRN, 2013, pp. 17-18).

The fourth objective, which aims to provide entrepreneurial, technical, and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance and agricultural, industrial, commercial, and economic development, should spur the Oyo State Government to take all necessary steps to increase enrollment in the TCs, equip the colleges, and empower the youth. According to Iyorkegh and Kankimes (2025), "the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has reiterated



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its commitment to strengthening Nigeria's technical and vocational education to enhance inclusive and sustainable growth in the country", this is an indication of the importance of TE worldwide which Oyo State should key-in, for skill development and employment opportunities for its youth which is in line with the sustainable development goals. UNESCO (2025) observed that "Nigeria faces a paradox: a young, vibrant population eager to contribute to economic growth, yet struggling with high youth unemployment and skills mismatches" (para. 3). According to Abiodun (2022), Nigeria's true wealth resides in this youth as they serve as a strategic resource advantage which can make Nigeria have a radical leap into modernity if they are carefully nurtured and developed in a globalized world, where knowledge and skills determine the competitive edge. Corroborating this, Adeleye (2025) noted that Nigeria has one of the world's most youthful populations. This potential strength could be leveraged as a demographic dividend rather than becoming a global crisis if the population is equipped with the skills the modern economy demands. These skills, according to Rafindadi (2023), are in five (5) key areas, and they contribute to youth development in (i) Employment generation. (ii) Economic development. (iii) Skill development. (iv) Social development, and (v) Personal development. *Trading Economics* (2025) reported that, as of June 2024, Nigeria's unemployment rate was 6.5%. However, UNESCO noted that youth unemployment in Nigeria remains alarmingly high, with estimates exceeding 30% in some regions. All of these should prompt the Oyo State Government to prioritize TE for its teeming youth, the focus of this research. DaSylva (2010) reported that, while Nigeria was considering the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system, scholars were optimistic that the parochial, elitist, and regurgitating education on the ground would be replaced with an education responsive to the needs and aspirations of Nigerian society. This report aligns with the pathways that Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) offers, outlined as including the reduction of youth unemployment, promotion of entrepreneurship, support for economic diversification, fostering social inclusion and gender equality, and enhancing productivity in key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services (UNESCO, 2025). Nwaelele (2022) therefore submitted that to tackle "major developmental problems such as poverty, unemployment, and social vices" (p. 126), entrepreneurial education, part of which is technical education, and a successful tool used by many nations, should be utilized.

Methodology

This study combines historical and survey methodologies, integrating both approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding. Various sources have been utilized to examine the evolution of the educational system, including the 6-3-3-4 and 9-3-4 systems, as well as past educational events. The survey component collects data from the following sources

Data Collected from: The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; Oyo State Board for Technical Education; The five Principals of the TCs were asked a set of random questions; Data was analysed using frequency count and percentages. The collected data have effectively answered the research questions. The first research question concerns the transition rate from JS to SS and TC, as stated below.

Population of the Study

Oyo State has five (5) public TCs located in Ibadan, Iseyin, Ogbomoso, Oyo, and Saki, and all of them were used. The researcher also interacted with college principals, who shared their views on the state of their institutions and potential solutions.

Presentation of Results

The collected data were analysed, which helped answer all the research questions and provide a focus for the study. They are presented below.

Research Question 1: What is the transition rate from the junior secondary school to the senior secondary and the technical colleges?

As shown in Table 1, the transition rate from JS to TC is lower than that from SS. The findings indicate that technical subjects have not been prioritized in the JS to attract more students beyond basic education. There is also the erroneous notion that TE is for those who are not academically sound, and no student wants to feel inferior; therefore, they continue in the SS even when they possess practical skills. While the average transition rate to SS for the four (4) sessions was 97.23%, the transition rate into TCs was 2.77%, which is too low.



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Table 1: Enrolment in the Public Junior, Senior, and Technical Schools, 2019-2024

Classes	Year and Enrolment				
	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
JSS 3	66,297	74054	90299	95123	NRS
SS 1	*NRS	75208 97.27%	82112 95.90%	90236 96.37%	415,444 99.37%
TC 1	*NRS	2,112 2.73%	3,508 4.10%	3,400 3.63%	2,618 0.63%

Source: Raw Data Collected. *NRS (Not Relevant to the Study)

Research Question 2: Considering the enrolment in senior secondary and the TCs, can Oyo State be credited with adequately implementing the 9-3-4 education system?

Table 1 explicitly addresses this question. The low enrolment in TCs indicates inadequate implementation of the 3-year programme following the 9-year basic education in Oyo State. Interaction with some stakeholders was oriented toward emphasizing TE at the basic education level, encouraging students to recognize the benefits of acquiring TE once they have the talent and develop their skills.

Research Question 3: Are the number of TCs available in Oyo State enough to implement the 9-3-4 education system effectively?

The answer would be emphatically negative. From the data above, it can be inferred that technical education is not given the same level of priority as secondary schools in Oyo State's educational system. Only five (5) TCs and 626 secondary schools stand at the moment; this is not good enough for the effective implementation of the 9-3-4 system. It is important to note that if TE has been embedded in the basic education curriculum, more students would likely have opted for it in their post-basic education. This could have made it imperative for Oyo State to establish additional TCs.

Research Question 4: What can Oyo State do to improve technical education?

This question is fundamental, given enrolment in the TCs, particularly in Saki on the Oke-Ogun axis, where enrolment is lowest, as shown in Table 3. Given a 1:125 ratio, the Oyo State Government should boost TE by providing modern, relevant equipment for TC operations. Ibadan and Oyo appear to have higher patronage of TE, whereas patronage in Iseyin is average. Ogbomoso and Saki have consistently low enrolment, except in the 2023/2024 session, when the Ogbomoso student population increased.

Section 3 paragraph 54 states that "every TC shall establish and operate a production unit for on-the-job training of students and for commercial activities to sustain college operations." It is laudable, but implementation is the real issue. The condition of equipment in the TCs is deplorable; most of it is obsolete, and little remains suitable for practical use. Unfortunately, the TCs that were supposed to be self-sustaining now depend on government subsidies to operate. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) is now focusing on technical and vocational education and training (TVET), not only in TCs but also at the secondary school level. It has made TE free across all its TCs and even promised students monthly stipends. The new partnership between FGN and the World Bank to introduce Innovation, Development and Effectiveness in the Acquisition of Skills (IDEAS) is an aspect that Oyo State can leverage to improve TE. Notably, it has commenced in the Oyo State capital, Ibadan, and the TWIM Institute is hosting it. Oyo State can engage the institute to help make TE more effective.

Table 2: Enrolment in the Technical Colleges in Oyo State by Location - 2020-2024

COLLEGE LOCATION	Year and Enrolment			
	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Ibadan	664	1,076	900	2,488
Iseyin	376	699	625	648
Ogbomoso	84	153	309	1,180
Oyo	938	1,514	1514	992
Saki	50	66	52	42

Source: Raw data collected



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Leveraging Technical Education (TE) in Oyo State for Sustainable Development

The upgrade of 6-3-3-4 to 9-3-4 in 2005 improved the literacy rate, and the three (3) still imply three (3) years in the SSS or the TC. It is therefore necessary to focus on TE for its inexhaustible benefits. One of these is reducing unemployment and underemployment, which are rampant in the country. At this juncture, it is pertinent to highlight several advantages of focusing on TE for both the individual student and society at large. Section 3, paragraph 50d, stated that trainees completing TC programmes shall have three options:

- (i) Secure employment either at the end of the whole course or after completing one or more modules of employable skills,
- (ii) Set up their own businesses and become self-employed, and be able to employ others.
- (iii) Pursue education in advanced craft/technical programmes and in post-secondary (Tertiary) technical institutions such as Polytechnics or Colleges of Education (Technical) and Universities (FGN 2013, p.37)

Based on the above expectations for post-technical education, it can be inferred that TE equips individuals with the skills needed for workplace competence, reduces unemployment and poverty rates, and contributes to the overall development of human capital, a critical factor in driving economic growth. If TCs in rural areas focus more on agricultural and agro-processing subjects, this can lead to rural development. TE encourages individuals to develop their latent skills and nurtures entrepreneurial capabilities that spur innovation, thereby attracting both foreign and local investors to support industrial growth. According to Okeke (2020), it is a truism that, as stipulated in Nigerian education policy, technical education is a pathway for developing high-quality technical human resources, thereby building a talent pool to advance the country's economy through vocational education. However, because attention has not been focused on TE, youth unemployment and the underutilization of their skills have increased. Prior to the recent developments in TE in Nigeria, there were 25 approved trades in TCs, as listed in Table 4 below; only a few courses related to modern technology were added to replace some or modernize others, thereby making them more relevant. They are: (i) Solar PV installation and maintenance (ii) Creative media (digital media production/operations) (iii) Networking & system security (including satellite TV antenna installation and maintenance) (iv) Social media content creation and management (v) Automobile CNG conversion and maintenance (vi) Mechanized agriculture (mechanization / smart agriculture) (Oyelakin 2025, para. 4).

In Oyo State, not all trades were available across all five colleges; only three of the 25 courses are offered across the TCs: Garment making, Graphics arts, and Carpentry and joinery. In some cases, four courses were available across all TCs. It should be noted that only TC Oyo offers an agriculture-related component, which may be insufficient for an agrarian society.

Table 3: Summary of Subjects Available in Oyo State Technical Colleges

S/N	Programmes	IBADAN	ISEYIN	OYO	OGBOMOSO	SAKI
1.	Agricultural Mechanic	-----	-----	**	-----	-----
2.	Block-laying and concreting	-----	-----	**	**	-----
3.	Carpentry and joinery	**	**	**	**	**
4.	Electrical installation	**	**	**	**	-----
5.	Fabrication and welding	**	**	**	**	-----
6.	Furniture craft	**	**	**	**	**
7.	Mechanical engineering practice	-----	-----	**	-----	-----
8.	Motor vehicle mechanic	**	**	**	**	**
9.	Painting and decorating	-----	**	**	**	-----



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10.	Plumbing and pipe fitting	**	-----	-----	-----	-----
11.	Radio and television	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
12.	Refrigeration and a/c	**	**	-----	**	**
13.	Business studies	-----	-----	**	-----	-----
14.	Catering craft practice	-----	-----	**	-----	-----
15.	Foundry craft	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
16.	Ceramics	**	-----	-----	**	**
17.	Garment making	**	**	**	**	**
18.	Graphics arts	**	**	-----	**	**
19.	Auto Electric Works	-----	**	-----	**	-----
20.	Leather trades/Shoe works	-----	-----	**	-----	-----
21.	Vehicle bodybuilding	**	-----	**	**	-----
22.	Instrument mechanics	-----	-----	-----	**	-----
23.	Printing craft	-----	-----	-----	**	-----
24.	Textile trades	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
25.	Machine woodworking	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Source: Federal Ministry of Education (2007, 144). NB: ** Available -----Not available

Conclusion

TE cannot be taken lightly in any state seeking to grow and develop its economy; therefore, it must be a focus in Oyo State. Given the benefits, much remains to be done in Oyo State. Formulating policies that guide educational processes is beneficial; however, effective monitoring of their implementation is also essential, particularly for the 9-3-4 policy in Oyo State. Effective monitoring will expose gaps, and immediate actions will be taken to bridge them, thereby achieving the objectives. In the early years of elementary education in Nigeria, few technical subjects were offered. In agricultural education, pupils were assigned farm plots that they effectively planted and monitored until harvest. Everyone was also involved in ceramic work, producing beautiful utensils for sale in local markets; unfortunately, these subjects were gradually dropped in favour of their theories. Incorporating elements of TE at the primary school level has become imperative for fostering an entrepreneurial mindset in young children.

Recommendations

1. Within the context of education for personal and national economic growth, Oyo State may need to declare a state of emergency in the technical education sector to revive it and enhance its inherent functions, thereby promoting economic growth and development. The transition rate could be improved, likely through scholarships or small stipends for students during training.
2. Oyo State should intensify supervision of the 9-3-4 policy for effective implementation. The State should include elementary vocational and technical education in the basic education curriculum, as this will help in instilling an entrepreneurial mindset in children before entering the post-basic level of education.



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3. There is an urgent need to establish more TCs that should be adequately equipped with modern state-of-the-art facilities for effective teaching and learning. The current TC-to-SS ratio of 1:125 indicates an ineffective implementation of the technical and vocational education component of the 9-3-4 policy.
4. It is evident, in the course of the research, that a significant portion of the equipment is obsolete and requires replacement with modern equipment. For TE to be adequately rewarding, much more needs to be done to ensure the provision of relevant, high-quality equipment that makes teaching and learning worthwhile.
5. One major issue is that research findings and recommendations are not always communicated effectively to policymakers, hindering the timely implementation of necessary actions. To instil hope and optimism for the future of technical education in Oyo State, Journals can begin to harvest recommendations from research they publish, serving as an additional avenue to inform the government of developments in the education sector and to prompt urgent remedial steps from all stakeholders.

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