

**IMPLEMENTATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN  
LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL OF MALE' IN REPUBLIC OF  
MALDIVES**

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## DEDICATION

Special for loved ones  
Make a beloved mother,  
Aishah Zubaidha

Make a dear wife,  
Farahath Ahmed

And a million thanks to the supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Ts. Dr. Mohamad Hisyam bin  
Mohd Hashim and friends struggle together to give encouragement as well  
all UTHM residents who always give support.

“Thank you for the prayers and blessings that always accompany the struggle  
as well as this success”



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## ABSTRACT

The skills of the Maldivians in the required fields are very important to develop the country. Until now, many skilled workers in the Maldives come from neighboring countries such as India and Sri Lanka. Therefore, a consistent and effective Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system is required to ensure the concept's success. This study aims to explore, understand, and explain the implementation of vocational education in Lower Secondary Schools of Male in the Republic of Maldives. A qualitative Fundamental Case Study research design was used in this study. A total of twelve (12) study participants were involved in this study. There are three (3) schools involved in this study which include three (3) principals, four (4) teachers, and five (5) students. The primary method of data collection is through interviews. The method of document analysis and observation is a method that supports the interview data. Findings are analyzed using the thematic method by understanding sentence segments and interpreting them into specific categories. These categories are analyzed and produce themes that help researchers develop conceptually. The finding shows that the concept, approach, implementation plan, impact on society, challenges, and relevance to higher education have been understood and referred to as a conceptual framework. Each of these components has its own elements that explain the implementation of vocational education in secondary schools. The framework also provides an overview of vocational education in secondary schools and can help schools to identify weaknesses in implementing vocational education and find strategies to address them. In conclusion, this research has provided valuable information about the implementation of vocational education in lower secondary schools in Male in the Republic of Maldives. The framework that was developed also acts as a guide for many parties to understand the vocational education system. The recommendation for the results of this study is to continue the study in a larger context and involve many other schools in the Maldives using different data collection and analysis methods. The results of this study can also be used to generate hypotheses for quantitative research as a continuation of the research.



## ABSTRAK

Kemahiran penduduk Maldives dalam bidang yang diperlukan untuk membangunkan negara amat diperlukan. Sehingga kini, ramai pekerja mahir di Maldives berasal dari negara jiran seperti India dan Sri Lanka. Oleh itu, dalam memastikan kejayaan konsep tersebut, sistem Pendidikan dan Latihan Teknikal dan Vokasional (PLTV) yang konsisten dan berkesan diperlukan. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka, memahami dan menjelaskan pelaksanaan pendidikan vokasional di Sekolah Menengah Rendah di Male' Republik Maldives. Reka bentuk kajian Kajian Kes Fundamental Kualitatif telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Seramai dua belas (12) orang peserta kajian telah terlibat dalam kajian ini. Tiga (3) buah sekolah terlibat dalam kajian ini. Mereka terdiri daripada tiga (3) orang pengetua, empat (4) orang guru dan lima (5) orang pelajar. Metod utama pengumpulan data adalah melalui temu bual. Metod analisis dokumen dan pemerhatian adalah metod yang menyokong kepada data temubual. Dapatan dianalisis menggunakan kaedah tematik dengan memahami segmen ayat dan mentafsirkannya ke dalam kategori tertentu. Kategori ini dianalisis dan menghasilkan tema yang membantu penyelidik mengembangkan konseptual. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan enam komponen utama iaitu konsep, pendekatan, pelan pelaksanaan, impak kepada masyarakat, cabaran dan kaitan dengan pengajian tinggi telah difahami yang dirujuk sebagai kerangka konsep. Setiap komponen tersebut mempunyai elemen tersendiri yang menjelaskan pelaksanaan pendidikan vokasional di sekolah menengah. Kerangka kerja tersebut juga memberikan gambaran keseluruhan pendidikan vokasional di sekolah menengah dan dapat membantu sekolah mengenal pasti kelemahan dalam melaksanakan pendidikan vokasional dan mencari strategi untuk menanganinya. Kesimpulannya, kajian ini telah memberikan maklumat berharga tentang pelaksanaan pendidikan vokasional di sekolah menengah rendah di Male' di Republik Maldives. Kerangka kerja yang dibangunkan juga menjadi panduan kepada banyak pihak untuk memahami sistem pendidikan vokasional. Cadangan kepada hasil kajian ini adalah untuk meneruskan kajian dalam konteks yang lebih besar dan melibatkan banyak sekolah lain di Maldives menggunakan kaedah pengumpulan dan analisis data yang berbeza. Hasil kajian ini juga boleh digunakan untuk menghasilkan hipotesis bagi penyelidikan kuantitatif sebagai kesinambungan kajian.



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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CBT	-	Competency-Based Training
CCE	-	College Entrance Exam
CCE	-	Centre for Continuing Education
CTE	-	Career and Technical Education
EDC	-	Education Development Centre
EEDP	-	Enhancing Education Development Project
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
INATEC	-	National Technological Institute
MoE	-	Ministry of Education
MNQF	-	Maldives National Qualifications Framework
NIE	-	National Institute of Education
OE	-	Occupational Education
TVET	-	Technical and Vocational Education Training
VET	-	Vocational Education and Training
WE	-	Workforce Education



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

The Maldives is a South Asian country known as a Republic of Maldives located in the Indian Ocean situated in the Arabian Sea. It lies southwest of Sri Lanka and India and the chain of 26 atolls which were made up of more than 1000 coral islands stretches from Ihavandhippolhu Atoll in the north to the Addu City in the south. The Maldives is known for its beaches, blue lagoons and extensive reefs. Male is the capital and most populated city and is traditionally called the “King’s Island” for its central location. Regarding education in modern-day the Republic of Maldives, there are three main streams that have contributed to the nature that is informal training, Islamic religious instruction and western-model schooling.

The current national system of education presents a merging of traditional and modern education. In the Maldives, the high rate of population increases and make the high dependency ratio continues to place severe burdens on the education system. Increasing the economic sector of the country need specify by skills and techniques in the education. The field of education in the Republic of Maldives in the world of Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) course is unique (Noordeen, 2011) and a lot of efforts from various departments are working in conjunction to promote this unique but important arena of education in the Maldives. Most likely same like other countries, linking education with employment has proven to be a real challenge to mankind especially in technical and vocational education.

The department involves in sustaining and improving TVET are the Ministry of Higher Education and Training, Ministry of Education, Education Development Centre (EDC), Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), PIU-TVET (Noordeen, 2009).



Nowadays CCE already turns to the National Institute of Education (NIE). TVET is based on young people in mastering skills, hands-on, upskilling and the concept behind those skills in technically over working life to get a job to support their life. Because of that, to achieve the key to success, a consistent and effective TVET system is needed. The most important is, the number of Maldivians for both men and women will increase with entry-level occupational qualifications and skills for employment or for self-sustaining livelihood initiatives (Noordeen, 2011).

TVET system in the Maldives, reconfirms that the system remains fragmented and improve in developing and approving skills development for the youth and all mankind in the country. This chapter will elaborate on the background of the study, discuss the problem statements, and emphasize the objectives to be achieved with the scope of the study. It is also highlighted the structure of the report.

## 1.2 Research Background

Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) is the key and it facilitates skills development for employability. Unfortunately, however TVET is regarded as second best to the academic stream and therefore gets less allocation of resources. Education is seen as the key to development and the researcher believes that TVET is the primary key. Abbot (2014) has defined Vocational Education or Vocational Education and Training (VET), also called Career and Technical Education (CTE), as preparing learners for jobs that are based on manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or *vocation*, hence the term, in which the learner participates. It is sometimes referred to as *technical education*, as the learner directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology.

This study will be conducted in the Republic of Maldives as the researcher want to clearly understand the implementation of vocational education in lower secondary schools of Male'. The geography and location of the Republic of the Maldives is a sovereign archipelagic nation positioned in the Indian Ocean. Notably the South Asian Island nation has no counterpart in the entire world in terms of its unique geography and topography. The Maldives encompasses more than 99 % of the sea and less than 1 % of the land. The 99 % of the sea is home to one of the most diverse marine treasures of the world. Less than 1 % of the land is a masterpiece in

natural landscaping. The Maldives comprises 26 natural atolls consisting of dual island chains.

Incidentally the Maldivian language has the distinct pleasure of contributing to the English word “atoll”, which was derived from the Maldivian word “atholhu”. There are channels of various sizes between the atolls used for navigation. For efficient administrative functioning, the 26 natural atolls are categorized into 20 administrative divisions. Particularly the island nation is located in a strategic area with access to major international sea routes in the Indian Ocean. The Maldives, located on top of a vast underwater mountain range have around 1190 islands and sandbanks. The pearl string like islands covers a land area of no less than 298 km<sup>2</sup>. All the islands are encircled by a lagoon blessed with crystal clear water. These islands are protected by a reef structure, housing one of the most exclusive and spectacular underwater life.

The Maldives government offers free education and focuses on improving the quality of primary and secondary education. Education in the Republic of Maldives has seen significant improvements over the last two decades. School education in the Republic of Maldives starts from age five and is usually completed at age 18. Children are required to start school education at the age of five at the beginning of the school year. After a year, they will continue to enter primary school for seven years starting from grade 1 at the age of 6. Subsequently, they will pursue junior high school in grades 8 to 9 at the age of 13 and high school from grades 11 to 12. Typically, high school will be completed at age 18.

Moreover, in 2014, for their education in the Republic of Maldives the Ministry of Education (MoE) has introduced new policies for the student including ‘No Child Left Behind’ and ‘Every Youth is Skilled’ policies to make sure every student leaves the formal schooling system with academic and/or vocational skill henceforth can expand life skills education and vocational education in the country especially for secondary students (MoE, Republic of Maldives). Unemployment without skills seems to be a key issued in the Republic of Maldives because young people seem hard to find a job through job advertisements, create resumes and prepare for job interviews. According to research from Enhancing Education Development Project (EEDP), even though having the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the job, it has been noted that the majority of young people and students do not have sufficient skills.

Private sector companies and stakeholder shared their information that youth in the Republic of Maldives is not well prepared when it comes to making resumes

and presenting themselves also communicate effectively during interviews. The President's Office (2011) states that the absence of a university, limited opportunities in higher education or tertiary education in most of the islands for higher studies and vocational training for youth are the lack of the required human resources. However, far too little attention has been paid to children or youth who are not being taught vocational subjects in school will cause a lack of important skills and that can eventually create a labor shortage in the vocational and technical fields of a country (Sheryn, 2011).

Statistic by Trading Economics (2018) shows the unemployment rate in the Republic of Maldives averaged 3.04 percent from 1991 until 2017, reaching all time high of 5.20 percent in 2014 and a record low of 0.80 percent in 1992. Along with this remain unchanged averaged, however, there is increasing concern over consequences of vocational and skills training that is given little attention within the education system (Hayashi, 2009). Therefore, the Government of Maldives (2009) stated that one of the policies put forward to reduce unemployment is ensuring that all school system needs to introduce students to career characteristics for the youth or students through work experience in employable vocational skills. Lene (2009) said that the total number of students in the region attending lower secondary school, approximately 35% of them made it to year eleven and twelve to prepare for their tertiary education. The other 65% either dropped out of secondary schooling at year ten or earlier or could not get places in further studies programs due to limited intake. In the Maldives, the main issue is related to graduates who are unemployed and lack technical expertise. There are also many workers from India, Sri Lanka and related countries.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

In the education system of any country, Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) has been a cornerstone. UNESCO UNEVOC (2010) has defined TVET as the concern in the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the world of work. Throughout the course of history, various terms have been used to describe elements of the field that are now conceived as comprising TVET. These include Apprenticeship Training, Vocational Education, Technical Education, Technical – Vocational Education (TVE), Occupational Education (OE), Vocational Education and Training (VET),

Professional and Vocational Education (PVE), Career and Technical Education (CTE), Workforce Education (WE), Workplace Education (WE), etc.

If TVET training is available to all who require it, there will be a reduction in poverty, as well as a movement towards equity and fairness. TVET is the educational master key that opens a door for countries struggling to survive in this divided world of rich and poor, literate and illiterate. TVET programs, if implemented well, can produce the following outcomes: (1) poverty alleviation, (2) equity, (3) justice and fairness leading to empowerment, (4) increasing participation rates and reduced school drop-out rates and (5) knock-on impact: such as improved levels of housing, health care and standards of living. TVET educational provisions are comprehensive and exciting and include the following: apprenticeship training technical vocational education: occupational vocational education: education and training: career technical education and continuing vocational education and training.

If they fail to get employment, they become totally dependent on their families and communities. The research has shown that the unskilled, unemployed population is increasing at an alarming rate across the Pacific. The number of secondary schools offering TVET varies from country to country relies on the national education systems they have. Courses offered are mainly associated with industrial arts subjects. Overall, the level of TVET skills students gains at secondary school is either very limited or non-existent. As entry requirements at regional universities for academic studies can only accommodate the top-level students from secondary school, the opportunities and vacancies available in TVET programs are insufficient to meet the increasing demand for places. Maldives Qualification framework MQF has only 1 column of components on the implementation of education, namely Academic. The TVET column is not in the MQF.

However, vocational students seem did not get a full opportunity if they want to track the nature of work or to continue their studies in the field of TVET. In this study, the researcher wants to look forward to the implementation of vocational education in secondary schools.

## 1.4 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore, understand and explain the implementation of vocational education in Lower Secondary Schools of Male' in Republic of Maldives using a fully qualitative methodology where the samples involved are principals, teachers, and students.

## 1.5 Research Questions

### Main Question

How the implementation of vocational education in lower secondary schools of Male' in Republic of Maldives?

### Sub Questions

- (i) What is the concept of Vocational Education offered in lower secondary schools of Male' in Republic of Maldives?
- (ii) What are the challenges in implementing the existing vocational subjects in lower secondary schools?
- (iii) How to overcome the challenges faced while implementing vocational education?
- (iv) How does vocational qualification of lower secondary level link to higher education in the Republic of Maldives?
- (v) What are the implementation plans for vocational education at the lower secondary level?
- (vi) How does vocational qualification of lower secondary level contribute to the community of Male'?
- (vii) How vocational educations provide enough skills for job?
- (viii) What are the teachings and learning approaches uses in vocational streams of Male'?
- (ix) Why the vocational qualification is important for the community?

## 1.6 Significant of Study

There are several significant from this study that can assist the Republic of Maldives government in education to upgrade the lower secondary education system, diversity the vocational subject and understand the system depth.

This study is very important to the Ministry of Education of the Maldives to plan policies and guidelines that can improve the learning experience of vocational education in schools, especially in schools that have implemented vocational education. In addition, the ministry can also plan a clearer pathway for students.

School managers can also plan appropriate activities and programs that have a high impact on students, parents, and the country. Very significant to the industry involved based on the programs created. The relationship between the school and the industry will also increase and the school will become more visible.

However, Vocational Curriculum must be specifically focused on the students who possess the expected potential to help in developing and cultivating the vocational education eventually to help to develop the country. Besides that, the significance also to inform the guidelines on best practices of the implementation of vocational education in lower secondary schools and to outline the existing vocational skills in the national curriculum.

## 1.7 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will guide researcher to the whole idea for the research. Researcher is listing the research questions based on some implementation and approaches that need to be done as the process of implementation of vocational education subjects in lower schools' secondary school of Male' in Republic of Maldives. The figure below clearly shows the theoretical framework of the implementation of Vocation Education.

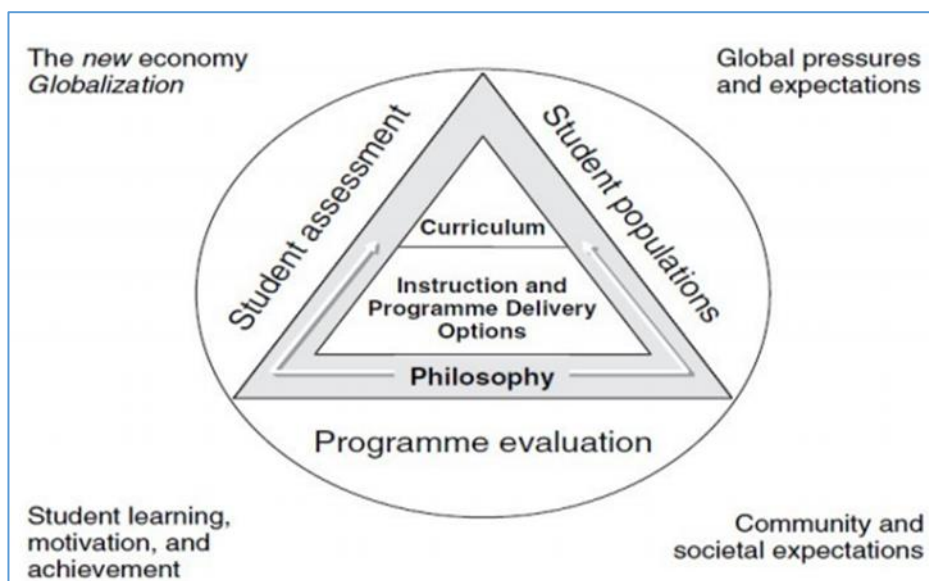


Figure 1.1: Implementation of Vocational Education (Rojewski 2009)

In this framework, the researcher will collect information on the implementation of vocational education in the Republic of Maldives through literature, interviews, and observations. Later, researcher will gather information through interviews to participants and observe lower secondary schools of Male' with 4 major elements which are a challenge in the implementation of TVET education, the outline for TVET education, guidelines provided by the Education Ministry and TVET market work, and approach to TVET education. The conceptual of the implementation of Vocational Education by Rojewski (2009) namely the new economic globalization; student learning, motivation and achievement; global pressure and expectations; community and social expectation become the basis of the guidelines of this study. This conceptual is not to be tested but only guidelines and suggestions that researchers bring to understand the implementation of vocational education in the Maldives.

Student learning

### 1.7.1 New Economic Globalization

The new world economy has become an item to apply value in national development, especially in developing the latest education system. This is very important and in line with the research carried out because the skills acquired in vocational education will be able to generate a more sustainable economy.

### **1.7.2 Student Learning, Motivation, and achievement**

Student learning, motivation and achievement are items related to the implementation of vocational education. Students must be given suitable learning facilities so that they are more motivated and ultimately able to achieve outstanding success. Although vocational education requires high financial resources, it can provide high motivation in student learning.

### **1.7.3 Global pressure and expectations**

High expectations and pressure from various parties is an item that is relevant to the development of the world in developing vocational education. This study which clearly understands the method of implementing vocational education in schools will give high hopes for educational change.

### **1.7.4 Community and social expectation**

High expectations and pressure from various parties is an item that is relevant to the development of the world in developing vocational education. This study which clearly understands the method of implementing vocational education in schools will give high hopes for educational change.

## **1.8 Scope of Study**

The Maldives' structure involves academic and occupational components as well as the formal and non-formal delivery system. The education system in the Maldives begins approximately at the age of 4 and ends around 23 years old. Secondary schools in the Maldives consist of grades 8-10 (lower secondary) and 11-12 (upper secondary). The Ministry of Education has divided the existing academics subject into 3 Streams. They are the Science Stream, the Commerce Stream and the Art Stream. All the students need to be registered under several compulsory and optional subjects such as Art, Biology, Commerce, Computing, Chemistry, Economics, Fisheries Science, English, Geography, History, Mathematics and Physics. In this research, the researcher explored the implementation of vocational education in lower secondary schools of Male'.

Vocational education is still in the beginning stage in the Republic of Maldives. The Ministry of Education in this Republic eager to develop and expand the benefits



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