The Influence of Educational Material Resources Procurement on Skills Acquisition Amongst Learners in Government Technical Schools in Mfoundi Division of Centre Region of Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

Technical and vocational education plays a significant role in equipping learners with practical competencies required for employment and national development. However, the effectiveness of technical education depends largely on the availability and proper procurement of educational material resources. This study examines the influence of educational material resources procurement on skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools in the Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon. The study was guided by the objective of determining how the procurement of educational material resources influences skills acquisition in technical schools. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, integrating qualitative approaches to obtain comprehensive dataas sujested by Kerlinger (1986). The target population consisted of administrators, teachers, and students from selected government technical secondary and high schools in Mfoundi Division. A sample size of 250 respondents was selected using purposive, convenient, and simple random sampling techniques in line with the reccomendations of Amin, (2005). Data were collected using interviews, focus group discussions, and observation checklists. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and presented in narrative form (Gall et al., 2003). Findings revealed that the availability and adequacy of material resources such as workshops tools, laboratory equipment, library documents, and classroom infrastructure significantly influence learners' ability to acquire technical skills. However, the study also identified challenges such as inadequate equipment, outdated workshop tools, insufficient learning materials, and overcrowded classrooms which hinder effective skills acquisition. The study concludes that proper procurement and management of educational material resources are essential for improving practical competence among learners in technical schools. It therefore recommends increased government investment in educational infrastructure, effective management of instructional materials, and continuous updating of workshop equipment to enhance skills acquisition in government technical schools.

Keywords: educational material resources, procurement, skills acquisition, learners in government technical schools.

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a key instrument for socio-economic development, particularly in developing countries where the demand for skilled manpower is rapidly increasing. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) plays a crucial role in equipping learners with practical competencies required for employment, productivity, and national development (UNESCO, 2016). In Cameroon, government technical schools are expected to provide learners with the practical and technical skills necessary to function effectively in the labor market. However, the effectiveness of these institutions depends largely on the availability and proper management of educational material resources used in the teaching and learning process. Educational material resources refer to the physical and instructional materials used to facilitate teaching and learning in schools. These resources include workshops, laboratories, tools, equipment, libraries, classrooms, and other instructional facilities that support practical training (Amin, 2005). In technical education, the availability of these resources is particularly important because learners must engage in hands-on activities that allow them to

translate theoretical knowledge into practical skills. Without adequate instructional materials and equipment, the process of skills acquisition becomes limited and ineffective.

Research has shown that the availability and proper use of educational materials significantly influence students' learning outcomes and performance. Instructional materials enhance learners' understanding of complex concepts, stimulate interest in learning, and create opportunities for practical engagement (Abdu-Raheem, 2011). Similarly, the presence of adequate workshops, laboratories, and modern tools enable students to practice repeatedly, which is essential for mastering technical competencies. According to La Berge and Samuels (1974), skills are developed gradually through repeated practice until learners achieve automaticity in performing specific tasks. Despite the importance of educational resources in technical education, many technical schools in developing countries face serious challenges related to the acquisition and management of these materials. Studies have indicated that inadequate infrastructure, insufficient workshop equipment, outdated learning tools, and overcrowded classrooms negatively affect the quality of teaching and learning in technical institutions (Gall et al., 2003; Kerlinger, 1986). These limitations reduce opportunities for students to engage in practical activities, which are essential for developing technical competencies required in the labor market.

In Cameroon, concerns have increasingly been raised about the quality of skills acquired by graduates from technical schools. Some stakeholders argue that many graduates lack adequate practical competencies required for employment due to limited exposure to practical training during their studies. This situation may be attributed to inadequate procurement and management of educational material resources in technical schools. The Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region hosts several government technical secondary and high schools responsible for training learners in various technical fields. However, the adequacy and effectiveness of the educational material resources available in these schools remain questionable. Given the importance of educational material resources in facilitating effective technical training, it is necessary to examine how their procurement influences skills acquisition among learners. Understanding this relationship can help policymakers, school administrators, and educational planners develop strategies to improve the quality of technical education. This study therefore investigates the influence of educational material resources procurement on skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools in the Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical studies have shown that the availability and proper utilization of educational material resources significantly influence teaching effectiveness and students' learning outcomes. Educational resources provide learners with opportunities to engage actively in the learning process and facilitate the acquisition of practical skills, particularly in technical and vocational education. Abdu-Raheem (2011) conducted a study on the availability and utilization of instructional materials in vocational and technical education. The study revealed that inadequate instructional materials negatively affect the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. According to the author, when schools lack adequate teaching materials and equipment, students find it difficult to understand practical concepts and develop the necessary skills required for professional practice. Similarly, Ogbuanya and Fakorede (2017) examined the relationship between instructional facilities and skill acquisition in technical education institutions. Their findings indicated that the presence of well-equipped workshops and laboratories significantly improves students' practical performance and competence. The study emphasized that technical education requires modern equipment and tools that reflect current industry standards in order to prepare learners adequately for the labor market.

Another study by Okoro (2010) highlighted the importance of instructional resources in promoting effective technical education. The author argued that practical learning experiences are essential for skill acquisition, and these experiences depend largely on the availability of appropriate tools and equipment in training institutions. Without such resources, technical education becomes merely theoretical and fails to achieve its intended objectives. Furthermore, UNESCO (2016) emphasized that technical and vocational education institutions must provide adequate learning facilities and modern training equipment to ensure that learners acquire relevant competencies required for employment. The organization noted that many developing countries struggle with inadequate educational infrastructure and outdated training equipment, which negatively affect the quality of technical education. In addition, the theory of human capital developed by Becker (1964) supports the idea that

investment in education and training enhances individuals' productivity and economic value. According to this theory, the acquisition of practical skills through effective training increases an individual's ability to contribute to economic development. Similarly, the theory of automaticity proposed by La Berge and Samuels (1974) explains that skills are acquired through repeated practice and experience, which can only occur when learners have access to adequate tools and training resources.

Despite the recognition of the importance of educational material resources in facilitating skill acquisition, many technical schools in developing countries still experience shortages of instructional materials and modern equipment. These challenges limit students' opportunities to practice and develop competencies necessary for the workplace. Consequently, investigating the influence of educational material resources procurement on skills acquisition is essential for improving the quality of technical education. This study builds on previous empirical findings by examining how the procurement of educational material resources affects the development of practical skills among learners in government technical schools in the Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon.

Problem Statement

Technical and vocational education plays a crucial role in preparing learners with practical competencies required for employment and socio-economic development. In many developing countries, including Cameroon, technical schools are expected to produce graduates who possess the practical skills necessary for industrial productivity and technological advancement. However, the effectiveness of technical education largely depends on the availability and proper procurement of educational material resources such as workshops, laboratories, instructional tools, and equipment used in practical training (Amin, 2005). Despite the expansion of technical education in Cameroon, concerns have been raised regarding the quality of skills acquired by learners graduating from government technical schools. Many employers have expressed dissatisfaction with the practical competence of graduates from technical institutions, arguing that some learners complete their training without mastering the necessary technical skills required in the labor market. This situation has been attributed partly to inadequate educational material resources and ineffective management of existing facilities in schools (Abdu-Raheem, 2011).

Educational material resources are essential for effective teaching and learning, particularly in technical and vocational education where practical experience is fundamental. Instructional materials help learners understand theoretical concepts, improve their motivation to learn, and provide opportunities for hands-on practice that leads to skill development (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). However, several technical schools in developing countries face significant challenges such as insufficient workshop equipment, outdated laboratory tools, overcrowded classrooms, and poorly equipped libraries. These challenges limit students' opportunities to practice and develop technical competencies required for employment (UNESCO, 2016). In the Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon, government technical schools play a major role in training learners in various technical disciplines. However, observations and reports from educators suggest that many of these schools face difficulties related to the procurement and availability of educational material resources. In some schools, workshop tools are outdated, libraries are poorly equipped, and laboratory facilities are inadequate for the growing student population. As a result, students often receive more theoretical instruction than practical training, which undermines the goal of technical education.

Although several studies have emphasized the importance of instructional materials in enhancing learning outcomes, there is limited empirical research focusing specifically on how the procurement of educational material resources influences skills acquisition in government technical schools in Mfoundi Division. This gap in knowledge makes it necessary to investigate the relationship between educational material resources procurement and skills acquisition among learners in these institutions. This study therefore seeks to examine the influence of educational material resources procurement on skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools in the Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon.

Research Objective

To examine the influence of educational material resources procurement on skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools in the Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon.

Research Question

How does the procurement of educational material resources influence skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools in the Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon?

Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design using a qualitative approach to investigate the influence of educational material resources procurement on skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools in the Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon. A descriptive survey design is appropriate for studies that aim to describe existing conditions and examine relationships between variables within a given population (Kerlinger, 1986). The use of mixed methods allowed the researcher to obtain comprehensive data and gain deeper insights into the phenomenon under investigation. The study was conducted in selected government bilingual technical secondary and high schools located in the Mfoundi Division, which is the administrative and political headquarters of Cameroon. The target population included teachers, administrators, and students involved in technical education within these institutions. These participants were considered appropriate because they are directly involved in the teaching, management, and learning processes related to the use of educational material resources in technical schools. A sample size of 250 respondents was selected from the target population using a combination of purposive, convenient, and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select the schools included in the study because they represent government technical institutions in the division. Convenient sampling was used to select teachers and administrators who were available during the period of data collection, while simple random sampling was applied in selecting student participants to ensure fairness and representativeness of the sample (Amin, 2005).

Data for the study were collected using several research instruments including interview guides, focus group discussions, and observation checklists. Interviews were conducted with school administrators to gather detailed qualitative information on resource management practices in the institutions. Focus group discussions with students were also organized to capture their experiences regarding the use of workshops, laboratories, and instructional materials during practical training. Qualitative data obtained from interviews, observations, and focus group discussions were analyzed thematically and presented in narrative form to complement the quantitative findings (Gall et al., 2003). These analytical procedures enabled the researcher to examine the relationship between educational material resources procurement and skills acquisition among learners in technical schools.

Research Findings

This section presents the results of the study on the influence of educational material resources procurement on skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools in the Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon. The findings are presented according to the research objective and hypothesis of the study.

- **Availability of Educational Material Resources in Government Technical Schools**

The first aspect examined in the study was the availability of educational material resources in government technical schools. Educational material resources include workshops, laboratory equipment, instructional tools, libraries, classrooms, and other facilities that support teaching and learning activities. These resources are essential for technical education because they enable learners to engage in practical training and develop the competencies required for professional practice (Amin, 2005). Results from observations and interviews to teachers and administrators indicated that while some technical schools in the Mfoundi Division possess basic educational resources, many institutions experience shortages of modern equipment and instructional materials. Respondents indicated that in several cases, workshops that were initially designed to accommodate a small number of students are currently being used by larger groups due to increasing enrollment in technical education programs.

Participants noted during interviews that overcrowding in workshops often prevents effective supervision and limits opportunities for individualized practice. Teachers explained that when too many learners share limited

tools and machines, it becomes difficult for each student to actively participate in practical exercises. As a result, some students mainly observe demonstrations rather than perform the tasks themselves. This situation reduces the level of engagement required for meaningful skills development. Observation data also revealed that in some schools certain technical departments function with minimal equipment. For example, respondents mentioned that machines used in mechanical or electrical workshops are sometimes obsolete and do not correspond to current industrial standards. Teachers explained that although they attempt to adapt their teaching methods to available resources, outdated equipment limits the extent to which learners can acquire relevant technical competencies required in modern workplaces.

In addition, participants indicated that libraries and instructional resource centers in several technical schools contain limited technical manuals and updated learning materials. Teachers reported that the absence of sufficient reference materials restricts learners' ability to conduct independent learning and research related to their technical fields. Educational material resources such as textbooks, technical drawings, and instructional charts play a significant role in supporting theoretical understanding that complements practical training (Amin, 2005). Interview responses also suggested that school administrators are aware of these limitations and often attempt to improvise solutions using locally available materials.

Some teachers reported designing improvised teaching aids to demonstrate technical concepts when standard tools are unavailable. Although such initiatives demonstrate the commitment of teachers to facilitate learning, they cannot fully replace modern technical equipment required for effective practical training. These findings confirm the importance of adequate educational material resources in technical education institutions. As emphasized by UNESCO (2016), the availability of appropriate infrastructure and instructional equipment is essential for effective technical and vocational education because it enables learners to practice real-life tasks and develop industry-relevant competencies.

- **Influence of Educational Material Resources on Skills Acquisition**

Another key aspect examined in the study was the influence of educational material resources procurement on skills acquisition among learners. Skills acquisition refers to the process through which learners develop practical competencies and abilities through training, practice, and experience. In technical education, the development of practical skills requires direct interaction with tools, machines, and other instructional materials. Findings from the study reveal that the availability of educational material resources significantly influences learners' ability to acquire practical skills. Further qualitative analysis of interview and focus group discussion data demonstrated that educational material resources play a central role in shaping learners' practical learning experiences. Participants consistently emphasized that technical education relies heavily on experiential learning, where learners develop competencies through direct interaction with tools, machines, and practical tasks.

Teachers reported that when workshops are adequately equipped, they are able to organize practical lessons that allow students to experiment, test ideas, and correct their mistakes through repeated practice. Such opportunities are essential for developing procedural knowledge and technical confidence. Respondents explained that learners who frequently interact with machines and tools tend to demonstrate greater competence and independence in performing technical operations. Students participating in focus group discussions also expressed strong views regarding the importance of practical resources. Many learners stated that the presence of sufficient tools enables them to practice tasks individually rather than simply observing demonstrations performed by their teachers. Individual practice helps learners internalize procedures and gradually improve their technical abilities.

Participants further explained that regular hands-on experience contributes to the development of problem-solving skills. During practical exercises, students encounter technical challenges that require them to apply theoretical knowledge in real situations. Through this process, learners develop analytical thinking and practical judgment that are necessary for professional practice. Another important observation emerging from the study is that access to modern educational resources increases learners' motivation and interest in technical education. Teachers indicated that students show greater enthusiasm during practical lessons when they are able to operate real machines and tools similar to those used in industry. Such exposure not only enhances learning outcomes but also prepares learners for future employment opportunities. Conversely, participants emphasized that

insufficient resources negatively influence students' skill development. Teachers explained that when only a few tools are available, practical sessions must be shortened or conducted in groups where several learners share one piece of equipment. This situation significantly reduces the time each learner spends practicing technical operations.

Students also expressed frustration regarding the limited opportunities to handle equipment independently. Some learners reported that during certain practical sessions they only observe demonstrations because the available tools are insufficient for the entire class. Without adequate practice, students may complete their training without mastering essential technical procedures. These findings support the view that practical exposure and repeated interaction with tools contribute significantly to skill development. According to LaBerge and Samuels (1974), repeated practice allows learners to move from conscious effort to automatic performance of tasks, thereby improving efficiency and competence.

- **Challenges Associated with Educational Material Resources Procurement**

The study also identified several challenges associated with the procurement and management of educational material resources in government technical schools. Responses obtained from school administrators highlighted institutional and systemic factors that affect the procurement of educational material resources. Participants indicated that procurement procedures in public educational institutions often involve administrative processes that may delay the acquisition of instructional equipment. These procedures sometimes require approval from multiple authorities, which can slow down the process of purchasing essential workshop materials. Administrators also explained that technical education requires specialized equipment that is often expensive to acquire and maintain. As a result, schools depend largely on government allocations or external support to update their workshops and laboratories. When funding is limited, school management may prioritize basic operational needs such as infrastructure maintenance and administrative expenses rather than purchasing new technical equipment.

Another challenge reported by respondents relates to the maintenance and sustainability of existing educational resources. Teachers explained that some machines and tools remain unused for long periods due to mechanical faults that cannot be repaired locally. In certain cases, spare parts for older machines are difficult to obtain, leading to prolonged periods during which equipment remains out of service. Participants also highlighted the absence of regular maintenance programs for technical equipment in some institutions. Without proper maintenance, machines deteriorate quickly and eventually become unusable. Teachers suggested that establishing structured maintenance schedules and training technical staff to service equipment could help extend the lifespan of available resources.

In addition, respondents noted that rapid technological advancement presents another challenge for technical education institutions. Equipment that was considered modern a few years ago may quickly become outdated as industries adopt new technologies. Schools therefore face continuous pressure to update their instructional resources to remain aligned with industry standards. Despite these challenges, participants emphasized the importance of collaboration between government authorities, educational institutions, and industry partners. Some respondents suggested that partnerships with private companies could help schools access modern equipment and provide learners with opportunities for industrial training. Such collaborations could strengthen the link between technical education and labor market requirements. Overall, the findings demonstrate that procurement and management of educational material resources are influenced by financial, administrative, and technical factors. Addressing these challenges is essential for improving the quality of practical training provided in government technical schools.

Verification Of Hypothesis (H_0 and H_1)

The hypothesis of the study stated that the procurement of educational material resources significantly influences skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools in Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon.

Null Hypothesis (H_0):

Educational material resources procurement has no significant influence on skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools in the Mfoundi Division.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):

Educational material resources procurement significantly influences skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools in the Mfoundi Division.

Based on the findings of the study, it was observed that the availability and adequacy of educational material resources such as workshops, laboratories, and instructional tools positively influence learners' practical training and competence development. Respondents indicated that students perform better when they have access to modern equipment and sufficient practical materials. Therefore, the findings of the study reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1), which states that educational material resources procurement significantly influences skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study provide important insights into the relationship between educational material resources procurement and the acquisition of practical skills among learners in government technical schools in Mfoundi Division. Technical and vocational education is fundamentally practical in nature, and therefore the availability and effective use of educational materials constitute a critical component of successful training. The results obtained from this study demonstrate that the procurement and availability of educational material resources significantly influence learners' ability to develop practical competencies required in technical fields. One of the major findings of this study is that the availability of educational material resources enhances the effectiveness of teaching and learning in technical schools. Respondents indicated that when schools acquire adequate tools, machines, and workshop equipment, teachers are able to conduct practical lessons more effectively. Practical activities allow learners to engage directly with the materials used in their respective trades, which strengthens their understanding of theoretical concepts. This finding is consistent with the views of Okorie (2000), who emphasized that technical education depends heavily on the availability of instructional materials and equipment for the development of practical skills.

Furthermore, the results show that learners who have access to adequate educational materials tend to develop higher levels of competence in their technical disciplines. Practical training enables learners to practice repeatedly, thereby improving their mastery of technical procedures. When learners are allowed to manipulate tools, machines, and other instructional materials, they gain hands-on experience that prepares them for real-world professional environments. According to UNESCO (2016), effective technical and vocational education requires adequate training facilities and equipment that allow learners to practice and acquire industry-relevant skills. Another significant finding of the study is that the procurement of educational material resources increases learners' motivation and participation during practical lessons. Students are generally more interested and engaged in learning when they are exposed to practical activities supported by adequate equipment. The presence of modern machines and tools creates an environment that encourages active learning and experimentation. Learners become more confident in their abilities when they are given the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge through practical exercises. This observation supports the argument of Akpan (2012), who noted that instructional resources play a crucial role in stimulating learners' interest and improving academic performance.

In addition, the study revealed that inadequate procurement of educational materials negatively affects the quality of technical education. In many cases, schools are forced to organize practical lessons with limited equipment, which prevents all learners from actively participating in training sessions. As a result, some students merely observe demonstrations instead of practicing individually. This situation limits the development of practical skills and reduces the overall effectiveness of technical education programs. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies which indicate that the lack of adequate instructional materials remains one of the major challenges facing technical education in developing countries (UNESCO, 2016). The study also highlighted the importance of modern and updated equipment in facilitating effective skills acquisition.

Technological advancement has transformed many technical professions, making it necessary for technical schools to keep their equipment up to date. When learners are trained using outdated tools or machines, they may encounter difficulties adapting to modern technologies in the labour market. Therefore, continuous procurement and upgrading of educational materials are essential to ensure that technical training remains relevant to current industrial practices.

Another important issue raised by the findings is the challenge of financial constraints affecting the procurement of educational materials in government technical schools. Many respondents indicated that limited funding makes it difficult for school administrations to purchase adequate workshop equipment. Technical machines and tools are often expensive, and schools may lack sufficient financial resources to procure them in large quantities. This financial limitation reduces the capacity of technical institutions to provide effective practical training for learners. The problem of inadequate funding in technical education has been widely documented in educational research. According to Amin (2005), insufficient financial resources constitute a major obstacle to the provision of adequate educational facilities in many developing countries. Without adequate financial support from government authorities and partners, technical schools may struggle to acquire the materials required for effective skills training. In addition to financial constraints, the study also revealed that poor maintenance of existing educational materials contributes to the shortage of functional equipment in technical schools. Some institutions possess workshop tools and machines that are no longer operational due to lack of maintenance or repair services. When equipment is not properly maintained, it gradually deteriorates and becomes unusable. This reduces the availability of materials required for practical training and negatively affects learners' skill development.

Proper management and maintenance of educational materials are therefore essential for sustaining effective technical education. Okorie (2000) emphasized that workshop equipment should be regularly maintained and properly utilized in order to maximize its lifespan and effectiveness. Schools should establish maintenance systems that ensure the regular servicing and repair of machines used in practical training. The study further revealed that administrative and procurement procedures sometimes delay the acquisition of educational materials in technical schools. Bureaucratic processes involved in purchasing equipment may slow down the supply of materials to schools, thereby affecting the timely implementation of practical training programs. Efficient procurement systems are therefore necessary to ensure that schools receive the materials required for effective teaching and learning. Overall, the findings of this study confirm that educational material resources procurement plays a crucial role in the development of practical skills among learners in technical schools. The acquisition of adequate tools, machines, and instructional materials enhances the quality of teaching and learning by enabling learners to practice and develop the competencies required in technical professions. However, challenges such as limited funding, inadequate maintenance, and procurement delays continue to affect the availability of educational materials in some schools. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts from government authorities, school administrators, and other stakeholders in the education sector. By improving the procurement, management, and utilization of educational material resources, technical schools can significantly enhance learners' skills acquisition and better prepare them for employment and national development.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of educational material resources procurement on skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools in the Mfoundi Division of the Centre Region of Cameroon. The findings revealed that the availability and proper procurement of educational material resources significantly contribute to the development of practical competencies among learners. The study established that educational resources such as workshops, laboratories, and instructional tools provide learners with opportunities to engage in practical training and develop technical skills necessary for employment. However, the study also identified several challenges, including inadequate funding, insufficient equipment, and poor maintenance of existing facilities, which limit the effectiveness of technical education.

Based on these findings, the study concludes that improving the procurement and management of educational material resources is essential for enhancing skills acquisition among learners in government technical schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Increased Government Funding: The government should increase financial support for technical schools in order to facilitate the procurement of modern workshops, laboratory equipment, and instructional materials necessary for effective practical training.

- Improved Resource Management: School administrators should implement effective management and maintenance strategies to ensure that existing educational material resources remain functional and accessible for teaching and learning.

- Regular Updating of Equipment: Technical schools should regularly update workshop tools and laboratory equipment to ensure that they reflect current industry standards and technological developments.

- Teacher Training on Resource Utilization: Teachers should receive regular training on the effective utilization of educational resources to enhance practical teaching methods and improve students' learning experiences.

- Collaboration with Industry: Government technical schools should establish partnerships with industries and private sector organizations to support the provision of modern training equipment and internship opportunities for students.

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