E-ISSN: 1115 - 8530 P-ISSN: 3026-8958
MPRI-JFRBD | INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF FINANCIAL RES. AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
VOL. 13 NO. 7 – JULY, 2026

SUSTAINABLE EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.70382/mejfrbd.v13i7.125

Abstract

The quality of technical education depends significantly on the availability, functionality, and sustainability of instructional equipment used for practical teaching and skills development. Despite substantial investments in workshop and laboratory facilities, many technical education institutions in Nigeria continue to experience challenges associated with inadequate equipment acquisition planning, weak procurement practices, poor maintenance culture, technological obsolescence, insufficient technical capacity, and ineffective asset management systems. Existing studies have largely examined these challenges independently, with limited attention given to developing an integrated framework that combines sustainable procurement, lifecycle asset management, digital equipment monitoring, preventive maintenance, and human capacity development. This study therefore developed a Sustainable Equipment Acquisition and Management Framework for technical education institutions in Nigeria. The study adopted a conceptual review methodology.The study proposes an integrated framework comprising institutional strategic goals, equipment needs assessment, sustainable procurement, installation and technology integration, digital asset

Keywords: Technical education; Equipment acquisition; Equipment management; Sustainable procurement; Asset lifecycle management; Preventive maintenance; Digital asset management; TVET; Nigeria.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

monitoring, preventive maintenance, human capacity development, performance evaluation, and sustainable equipment utilization**.** The framework extends Asset Lifecycle Management Theory by integrating these interrelated components into a continuous lifecycle management model supported by a feedback mechanism for continuous improvement. Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on equipment acquisition, funding, or maintenance challenges, the proposed framework provides a holistic approach that links strategic planning with equipment lifecycle management to improve equipment reliability, extend asset lifespan, reduce operational costs, strengthen practical skills acquisition, and enhance graduate employability. The framework offers practical guidance for policymakers, institutional administrators, accreditation agencies, procurement officers, and development partners seeking to improve the sustainability and effectiveness of equipment management in Nigerian technical education institutions.

Introduction

The importance of technical education cannot be underestimated in the context of national development, as it provides individuals with the necessary skills, technological knowledge, and competencies required to contribute to industrialization, innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth. Globally, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes have become a powerful tool for developing a competent workforce capable of responding to technological advancements, digitalization, and the demands of the Industry 4.0 era. International organizations such as UNESCO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have consistently emphasized that quality technical education is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Quality Education (SDG 4), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), and Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2021).

Technical educational institutions, such as polytechnics, technical colleges, monotechnics, colleges of education (technical), and vocational training centres, serve as major platforms for producing middle- and high-level technical manpower required in engineering, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, information and communication technology, renewable energy, and other technology-driven sectors. These institutions are expected to provide competency-based education that enables learners to acquire practical knowledge, technical competence, innovation capabilities, and employability skills. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) has consistently emphasized the

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

modernization of workshops, laboratories, and instructional facilities as prerequisites for programme accreditation, graduate competence, and effective quality assurance (NBTE, 2022).

Quality and effectiveness of technical education are largely dependent on the availability, adequacy, functionality, and proper utilization of instructional equipment. Instructional facilities and equipment, such as workshops, laboratories, production machines, simulation facilities, Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines, renewable energy equipment, robotics, and digital fabrication technologies, provide students with practical competencies that align with the requirements of industrial environments. Given the competency-based nature of technical education, continuous access to functional, modern, and industry-relevant equipment is indispensable for effective skills acquisition and workforce development (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2021).

Recent evidence from Nigeria indicates that inadequate instructional equipment and ineffective equipment management practices remain among the major challenges affecting the effective delivery of technical education programmes. According to the Federal Ministry of Education (2021), many public technical colleges continue to experience shortages of modern laboratory and workshop facilities, poorly maintained equipment, and inadequate technological upgrades, thereby limiting the effectiveness of practical instruction. Similarly, the accreditation guidelines and minimum standards of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) emphasize that technical education programmes must provide adequate workshop equipment, modernized laboratories, effective maintenance systems, and compliance with prescribed equipment standards to ensure quality training and programme sustainability (NBTE, 2022).

To address these challenges, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has continued to make substantial investments in laboratory development, workshop rehabilitation, equipment acquisition, research facilities, and innovation centres across Nigerian tertiary institutions through its annual intervention programmes (TETFund, 2023). However, despite these interventions, many institutions continue to experience equipment breakdowns, underutilization of available facilities, inadequate preventive maintenance practices, and weak asset management systems. This suggests that financial investment alone does not necessarily guarantee the sustainability and effective utilization of instructional equipment.

Empirical studies conducted in Nigeria further support these observations. For instance, Audu, Kamin, and Balash (2013) found that inadequate instructional facilities, poor equipment maintenance practices, and limited access to modern workshop resources negatively influence the effectiveness of technical and vocational education programmes in Nigeria. Similarly, Okoye and Okwelle (2014) reported that obsolete training facilities, inadequate equipment provision, and weak maintenance culture remain significant

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

constraints limiting the capacity of Nigerian technical institutions to produce graduates with relevant practical skills. Likewise, Oviawe (2018) observed that the successful integration of emerging technologies and competency-based training approaches in technical education requires adequate modern instructional facilities, technological resources, and effective management systems. These findings indicate that the challenges confronting technical education extend beyond the mere acquisition of equipment; they also involve effective utilization, maintenance, sustainability, and strategic management of available resources.

However, beyond equipment scarcity lies a more fundamental challenge relating to post-acquisition equipment management. In many Nigerian technical education institutions, equipment management remains largely procurement-oriented, with greater emphasis placed on acquisition and installation rather than long-term sustainability. Critical considerations such as life-cycle cost analysis, preventive maintenance, availability of spare parts, computerized monitoring systems, staff training, energy efficiency, and future technological upgrades are often overlooked. Consequently, many expensive instructional facilities become underutilized, deteriorate prematurely, or become obsolete within relatively short periods.

Modern theories of sustainable asset management advocate a shift from traditional procurement approaches towards comprehensive lifecycle management strategies. According to the Asset Management Framework contained in ISO 55000:2014, equipment sustainability should incorporate strategic planning, needs assessment, procurement, installation, operation, preventive maintenance, condition monitoring, performance evaluation, modernization, and environmentally responsible disposal (ISO, 2014). Similarly, ISO 20400:2017 recommends that organizations assess equipment not only based on initial purchase cost but also on factors such as durability, maintenance requirements, operational efficiency, environmental sustainability, supplier support, and total life-cycle cost (ISO, 2017). This approach enables institutions to maximize equipment utilization, reduce operational costs, minimize downtime, and enhance long-term asset value.

Furthermore, recent international literature highlights the growing need to integrate digital technologies, green skills, sustainability principles, and Industry 4.0 practices into technical education. Digital asset management systems, predictive maintenance technologies, Internet of Things (IoT)-based monitoring systems, and sustainable equipment utilization practices have been demonstrated to enhance institutional efficiency, improve equipment reliability, and strengthen students' practical competencies (UNESCO, 2021; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2021; World Economic Forum, 2023).

Nevertheless, a significant gap remains in the existing literature. Most previous studies have examined equipment-related challenges separately, with emphasis on issues such as

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

equipment availability, funding limitations, procurement procedures, maintenance practices, equipment obsolescence, or infrastructure deficiencies. Although these studies have contributed substantially to understanding various dimensions of equipment management, few have attempted to develop an integrated framework that combines strategic procurement planning, lifecycle asset management, digital equipment monitoring, preventive maintenance, institutional capacity development, and continuous performance evaluation specifically within Nigerian technical education institutions. Consequently, equipment procurement strategies often remain inadequately connected with asset management practices, maintenance systems, and institutional sustainability objectives.

The importance of addressing this gap becomes evident when considering that instructional equipment represents one of the largest capital investments in technical education institutions. Without a sustainable equipment management strategy, significant investments in workshops and laboratories are likely to experience rapid deterioration, reduced functionality, and diminished educational value over time.

Consequently, the present study proposes a Sustainable Equipment Acquisition and Management Framework for Technical Education Institutions in Nigeria**.** The proposed framework is anchored on Asset Lifecycle Management Theory, sustainable procurement principles, digital asset management practices, preventive maintenance strategies, and human capacity development. It incorporates key components such as equipment needs assessment, sustainable procurement, technology integration, digital asset management, preventive maintenance, stakeholder collaboration, and performance evaluation. Unlike previous studies that examine equipment acquisition, maintenance, financing, or infrastructure challenges independently, this study presents a comprehensive framework aimed at improving equipment utilization, extending equipment lifespan, enhancing the quality of practical training, increasing institutional resource efficiency, and producing graduates with competencies aligned with the demands of modern industry.

The main objective of this study is to develop a sustainable equipment acquisition and management framework for technical education institutions in Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to: Examine the existing challenges and practices associated with equipment acquisition and management in technical education institutions in Nigeria; Identify the key components required for sustainable equipment acquisition and lifecycle management, including procurement planning, maintenance practices, digital monitoring, and technical capacity development. And develop a sustainable equipment acquisition and management framework that can enhance equipment utilization, longevity, and effectiveness in technical education institutions in Nigeria.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

Equipment Acquisition in Technical Education Institutions

Equipment acquisition can be defined as the process through which technical education institutions plan and strategically assess equipment needs, evaluate technological options, acquire appropriate facilities, install equipment, and commission them for instructional, learning, research, and practical work purposes. Equipment acquisition by technical education institutions involves the provision of workshop machines, laboratory facilities, production equipment, simulation equipment, digital learning equipment, renewable energy equipment, among other instructional resources used in developing the technical competence of learners (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022; International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021).

Unlike procurement, which revolves primarily around acquisition and delivery, sustainable equipment acquisition seeks to create value by planning, optimizing resource utilization, and managing the entire life cycle of equipment. Modern TVET systems recognize that equipment acquisition represents an institutional investment that requires strategic planning rather than being treated as a simple purchasing activity. Consequently, equipment acquisition should consider institutional objectives, curriculum requirements, industry expectations, technological advancement, and sustainability concerns to ensure that instructional facilities remain relevant throughout their operational life cycle (UNESCO, 2023; European Training Foundation [ETF], 2022). This perspective implies that equipment should not be assessed solely based on immediate availability or purchase cost but also on its relevance to teaching and learning, operational efficiency, sustainability, adaptability to technological changes, and contribution to competency-based education.

One of the critical considerations in sustainable equipment acquisition relates to compliance with curriculum requirements. Equipment acquired by technical education institutions must align with approved academic programmes, laboratory activities, workshop practices, and competency-based training objectives. Equipment that does not correspond with curriculum demands often becomes underutilized, resulting in inefficient resource allocation and limited opportunities for learners to acquire relevant practical competencies. Therefore, effective equipment acquisition planning requires collaboration among academic departments, curriculum specialists, laboratory technologists, industry stakeholders, and institutional administrators (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022; ILO, 2021).

In the same manner, it is necessary for educational institutions to align their technical education delivery mechanisms with contemporary industry standards. Most modern industries increasingly rely on automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, CNC technology, additive manufacturing, and other technologies associated with Industry 4.0. Consequently, it is important for institutions to acquire the appropriate types of equipment that enable learners to develop relevant competencies. The availability of

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

industry-related equipment enhances the employability of graduates, strengthens institutional–industrial partnerships, and promotes the integration of emerging technologies into TVET programmes (UNESCO, 2023; OECD, 2023).

Another aspect of sustainable equipment acquisition relates to the availability of spare parts, technical services, and maintenance support. Some institutions acquire advanced technologies but are unable to provide for replacement parts, supplier support, software upgrades, and technical services, which eventually leads to equipment obsolescence or malfunction. This situation is particularly common in developing countries, where expensive laboratory and workshop equipment often becomes obsolete or ineffective due to inadequate maintenance and limited technical support. Sustainable equipment acquisition, therefore, involves procuring equipment that can be supported through sustainable procurement practices (World Bank, 2022; ILO, 2021).

Moreover, energy conservation and environmental sustainability are among the major factors that should be considered during equipment acquisition. Institutions are encouraged to incorporate environmentally friendly procurement practices that reduce energy consumption, lower carbon emissions, and promote efficient resource utilization. Energy-efficient equipment not only reduces operational costs but also contributes to achieving institutional sustainability goals and preparing future engineers and technicians for environmentally responsible industrial practices. Furthermore, the inclusion of sustainable technologies in laboratories exposes learners to green technologies and sustainable manufacturing processes that are increasingly required in engineering industries (UNESCO, 2023; United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2021).

Equipment sustainability acquisition processes should also include maintenance planning and institutional technical capacity. The effectiveness of newly acquired equipment depends largely on the institution's capacity to operate, maintain, calibrate, and repair the equipment throughout its operational lifespan. The acquisition of technologically sophisticated equipment without adequate training for lecturers, technologists, and technicians often leads to inefficient utilization, operational errors, and premature deterioration of the equipment. Therefore, equipment acquisition should be accompanied by maintenance plans, training programmes, and the provision of technical and operational manuals.

Moreover, sustainable procurement requires consideration of the life-cycle cost of equipment rather than focusing solely on the initial purchase price. Life-cycle costing includes the costs associated with acquisition, installation, operation, energy consumption, maintenance, repairs, calibration, software upgrades, replacement of parts, and eventual disposal of the equipment. Equipment with a relatively high purchase cost may ultimately prove more economical due to lower maintenance expenses, reduced energy consumption, and a longer operational lifespan. Conversely, selecting equipment

based solely on a relatively low acquisition cost may result in increased operational expenses and unreliable performance. Recent international sustainable procurement standards, therefore, promote life-cycle costing as an essential principle of sustainable procurement (ISO 20400, 2024).

Another key issue that needs to be considered is environmental sustainability throughout the life cycle of equipment. Sustainable acquisition extends beyond equipment installation to include environmentally responsible management after the equipment becomes obsolete. This implies that institutions should consider equipment refurbishment, recycling, recovery of reusable components, and environmentally sustainable disposal of obsolete equipment and electronic waste.

Recent scholarly literature has demonstrated that sustainable equipment acquisition is a critical factor in ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of technical education programmes. Organizations that implement life-cycle approaches to equipment acquisition are better positioned to maximize equipment utilization, prevent equipment failures, improve maintenance effectiveness, minimize costs, and enhance learning outcomes (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2025; OECD, 2024). Sustainable equipment acquisition should, therefore, be regarded not merely as a procurement activity but as a comprehensive process that integrates education, innovation, financial efficiency, sustainability, and asset management.

Given the Nigerian context, the implementation of sustainable equipment acquisition provides an effective solution to challenges such as outdated teaching facilities, inefficient procurement systems, inadequate maintenance planning, and poor utilization of equipment. Through sustainable equipment acquisition practices that incorporate curriculum requirements, industry needs, technological advancement, life-cycle considerations, environmental sustainability, and stakeholder collaboration in decision-making, technical education institutions can improve equipment reliability, develop competency-based training, meet accreditation requirements, and produce professionals with the technical skills required by modern industries.

Equipment Management in Technical Education Institutions

Equipment management is defined as the process of managing institutional equipment through planning, organizing, operation, control, evaluation, and maintenance to achieve optimal efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. In technical education institutions, equipment management involves all processes related to the acquisition, utilization, maintenance, upgrading, and eventual disposal of instructional equipment used in teaching and learning. Effective equipment management ensures that workshops, laboratories, and training centres continue to function efficiently and sustainably in

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

supporting competency-based education and practical training for industry (ISO 55000, 2024).

In Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), equipment management occupies a strategic position because practical training involves the use of workshop machinery, laboratory equipment, production systems, simulation technologies, digital fabrication facilities, and other forms of equipment. Unlike traditional learning institutions that emphasize classroom-based instruction, technical education requires interaction with modern technologies to achieve practical competencies and problem-solving skills. Poor equipment management, therefore, not only limits learning opportunities but also affects institutional accreditation, productivity, graduate employability, and the ability of institutions to adapt to technological changes in industry (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2025).

Contemporary equipment management is grounded in the concept of Asset Lifecycle Management, where institutional equipment is viewed as strategic assets and managed accordingly throughout their entire useful life cycle rather than being treated simply as procurement goods. Equipment management within this framework considers technical, operational, financial, environmental, and managerial factors from planning through acquisition, installation, operation, maintenance, modernization, performance assessment, and eventual replacement of equipment. According to ISO 55000 (2024), organizations that adopt an asset management lifecycle approach are able to derive maximum value from their physical assets while minimizing risks, costs, and premature equipment failures. Thus, the equipment management lifecycle shifts institutional attention beyond the procurement process towards equipment sustainability and optimal performance.

Planning and budgeting form the foundation of effective equipment management. Planning involves identifying equipment needs based on curriculum requirements, student enrolment, accreditation criteria, technological developments, labour market demands, and institutional strategic objectives. Budgeting for equipment management should not be limited to procurement expenses alone; it should also include provisions for installation, staff training, servicing, repairs, software updates, calibration, spare parts, and equipment replacement. Institutions that incorporate long-term planning into their equipment management systems are generally better positioned to maintain functional workshops and laboratories than those that rely on reactive procurement decisions or irregular funding arrangements (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2025).

Planning obviously plays an influential role in procurement, where institutions are required to assess the most appropriate technologies for meeting instructional purposes and industrial needs. Under sustainable procurement practices, equipment assessment is based not only on acquisition cost but also on factors such as quality, durability, energy efficiency, supplier reliability, warranty coverage, availability of spare parts, and technical

support, among others. Institutions that make equipment procurement decisions based solely on acquisition cost often encounter high maintenance expenses, operational inefficiencies, and reduced equipment lifespan. However, incorporating lifecycle considerations into procurement decisions enhances equipment reliability, improves return on investment (ROI), and reduces long-term costs (ISO 20400, 2024).

After procurement, effective equipment management largely depends on proper installation and commissioning. Poorly installed, uncalibrated, or inadequately tested equipment may result in inefficiency and safety risks. During the commissioning process, equipment must be inspected, calibrated, functionally tested, made user-ready, documented, and validated for operational performance.

The operation and utilization phase involves the period when equipment is used for educational purposes, including teaching, research, innovation, and skills training. Sustainable utilization requires competent lecturers, technologists, technicians, and laboratory assistants who can operate sophisticated equipment properly and safely. Institutions need to establish operational procedures, usage schedules, maintenance policies and programmes, safety practices, and supervision mechanisms that promote proper equipment utilization while preventing misuse, excessive wear and tear, and unnecessary damage. Effective operations management ensures that costly educational facilities remain available to students while maintaining acceptable levels of reliability and performance (UNESCO, 2023; OECD, 2023).

One of the key features of sustainable equipment management is the establishment of preventive maintenance programmes. Preventive maintenance involves regular inspection, cleaning, lubrication, calibration, servicing, software updates, and replacement of worn-out components before equipment failure occurs. Unlike reactive maintenance, which is performed after equipment breakdown, preventive maintenance aims to preserve operational efficiency, extend equipment lifespan, reduce maintenance costs, and minimize disruptions to practical education. Institutions with structured preventive maintenance programmes experience improved equipment availability, lower repair costs, more efficient workshops, and enhanced instructional effectiveness compared with institutions that rely mainly on corrective maintenance practices (ISO, 2014; Mobley, 2002).

Despite the implementation of effective maintenance programmes, technological advancement and industrial transformation require institutions to continuously upgrade and improve their equipment. While timely repairs restore equipment functionality following unexpected failures, modernization enables institutions to integrate emerging technologies such as automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, additive manufacturing, digital control systems, and IoT-enabled production technologies into their training programmes. Equipment modernization remains essential because industrial

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

technologies evolve rapidly, meaning that equipment that was initially suitable for instructional purposes may become technologically obsolete even when it remains operational. Therefore, equipment modernization enables institutions to prepare learners with skills relevant to contemporary industrial practices (World Economic Forum, 2023; UNESCO, 2021).

Replacement and environmentally responsible disposal of equipment represent the final stages of the equipment lifecycle. Decisions regarding equipment replacement should be guided by factors such as efficiency, maintenance history, safety considerations, technological relevance, and maintenance costs rather than relying solely on the age of the equipment. Similarly, environmentally sustainable disposal has become increasingly important in asset management. Institutions should adopt disposal strategies that encourage refurbishment, recycling, and the recovery of reusable components. Such strategies promote compliance with environmental sustainability principles and support circular economy practices in asset management (ISO, 2015; United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2024).

It is evident from the various activities involved in the equipment lifecycle that effective equipment management extends beyond maintenance. Rather, it represents a comprehensive institutional strategy aimed at optimizing the utilization and value of learning resources throughout their useful life cycle. By integrating effective planning, sustainable procurement, professional installation, responsible utilization, preventive maintenance, modernization, and environmentally responsible replacement, institutions can achieve consistent equipment availability, improved practical instruction, reduced operational costs, and enhanced graduate employability (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022; OECD, 2023).

In the Nigerian context, weaknesses in equipment management constitute one of the major factors contributing to the inefficiency of technical education programmes. Many institutions continue to experience inadequate maintenance plans, inconsistent funding, outdated inventory management systems, shortages of skilled technologists and technicians, weak maintenance cultures, and limited adoption of computerized asset management systems. Consequently, equipment failures, prolonged downtime, underutilization of expensive learning resources, disruption of practical classes, increased maintenance costs, and declining instructional quality remain persistent challenges. This situation reflects broader challenges identified in Nigerian technical and vocational education, where inadequate infrastructure maintenance, obsolete facilities, and limited technical capacity continue to affect training quality (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022).

Sustainable TVET systems require integrated approaches to equipment management that combine preventive maintenance, technical capacity development, digital monitoring,

and lifecycle planning (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022). Furthermore, effective management of modern equipment is essential for integrating emerging technologies, green skills, Industry 4.0 practices, and sustainable production approaches into technical education curricula (UNESCO, 2021).

This implies that equipment management should not be viewed solely as a maintenance activity but as an institutional management system that incorporates technical, financial, operational, environmental, and human resource considerations throughout the entire equipment lifecycle. By adopting a lifecycle approach, institutions can maximize equipment utilization, ensure quality instruction, strengthen industry partnerships, promote institutional sustainability, and produce highly skilled personnel capable of competing in technology-driven economies (OECD, 2023; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022).

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

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Asset Lifecycle Management Theory

This study is based on the Asset Lifecycle Management Theory (ALMT), as the theory provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how physical assets are planned, acquired, operated, maintained, managed, improved, and retired to derive maximum value throughout their useful lives. The theory evolved from engineering asset management practices and has undergone significant development through the efforts of the Institute of Asset Management (IAM, 2015) and the standardization initiatives of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) through the development of the ISO 55000 Asset Management Standards, initially introduced in 2014 and subsequently updated in ISO 55000:2024.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

ALMT suggests that organizational assets should not be regarded merely as acquisitions but should be strategically managed throughout their lifecycle to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness, reduce risks, minimize costs, and maximize value (ISO, 2024). The theory proposes that every asset passes through specific lifecycle stages, including planning, acquisition, installation, operation, maintenance, performance monitoring, enhancement, replacement, and disposal. Decisions made during the early stages of an asset's lifecycle significantly influence its later efficiency, performance, and maintenance requirements. Therefore, the theory emphasizes that organizations should adopt a lifecycle approach that integrates technical, financial, operational, and environmental considerations in asset management processes.

Recent developments in asset management have expanded the scope of the theory by emphasizing the integration of digital asset management systems, predictive maintenance approaches, condition monitoring, sustainability practices, and performance improvement strategies to ensure the efficient utilization of physical assets throughout their entire lifecycle (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2025).

This theory is relevant to the present study because instructional equipment represents one of the most important physical assets owned by technical education institutions. The effectiveness of teaching processes and practical skills acquisition depends significantly on the availability of functional equipment in workshops and laboratories, as well as the sustainability of instructional facilities. However, many technical education institutions in Nigeria face challenges such as outdated equipment, poor maintenance practices, and inefficient utilization of available facilities, which negatively affect instructional quality and limit learners' access to practical experiences.

Therefore, Asset Lifecycle Management Theory provides an appropriate theoretical foundation for addressing these challenges because it emphasizes that equipment sustainability requires more than acquisition; it also involves effective planning, utilization, preventive maintenance, performance monitoring, upgrading, and proper disposal. The theory aligns closely with the objectives of this study because it facilitates the examination of existing equipment procurement and management practices, identification of key components of sustainable equipment management, and justification for developing a comprehensive framework for the sustainable acquisition and management of equipment in technical education institutions in Nigeria.

By applying the principles of Asset Lifecycle Management Theory, institutions can improve equipment reliability, reduce maintenance costs, extend equipment lifespan, enhance resource allocation, and improve the quality of practical training. Consequently, the theory demonstrates that sustainable equipment management requires consideration of the entire asset lifecycle rather than focusing exclusively on procurement.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

Challenges of Equipment Acquisition and Management in Nigerian Technical Education Institutions

Although there is increasing recognition of the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in promoting industrialization and global competitiveness, several challenges continue to hinder the effective acquisition and management of instructional equipment in Nigerian technical education institutions. These challenges extend beyond financial limitations to include organizational, managerial, technological, and policy-related constraints that collectively influence the effectiveness of practical skills training. Since instructional equipment constitutes the foundation of competency-based technical education, ineffective management of such equipment affects the quality of instruction, students' practical competencies, institutional productivity, programme accreditation, and graduate employability. Recent studies emphasize the need to address financial, organizational, technological, and human resource constraints simultaneously to ensure the sustainability of technical education systems.

One of the major challenges affecting sustainable equipment acquisition and management is inadequate funding. Contemporary technical education requires significant investment in advanced machinery, laboratory equipment, digital manufacturing facilities, renewable energy systems, simulation centres, and other instructional resources. However, many technical education institutions in Nigeria face serious funding constraints arising from inadequate budgetary allocations, limited internally generated revenue, and competing institutional priorities.

Consequently, available funds are often insufficient not only for procuring modern instructional equipment but also for installation, maintenance, calibration, software licensing, equipment upgrading, and capacity development for instructors. Limited investment in automated equipment management systems and replacement planning contributes to rapid deterioration of instructional resources and poor learning outcomes. Sustainable equipment management, therefore, requires continuous investment throughout the equipment lifecycle rather than reliance on one-time procurement expenditure (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2025).

In addition to funding constraints, procurement challenges remain among the major factors negatively affecting sustainable instructional equipment management. Many institutions prioritize initial purchase price rather than considering equipment durability, total lifecycle costs, energy efficiency, availability of spare parts, supplier reliability, after-sales technical support, and compatibility with curriculum requirements. As a result, such procurement practices often lead to the acquisition of equipment that becomes expensive to maintain or technologically obsolete within a short period due to inadequate maintenance support systems.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

Sustainable procurement requires institutions to adopt lifecycle costing approaches that evaluate equipment based on its long-term economic, operational, and educational value rather than focusing solely on the initial acquisition cost (ISO 20400, 2024).

One of the continuing challenges affecting sustainable equipment acquisition and management is the problem of a poor maintenance culture, which results in low equipment availability and reduced operational efficiency. Many maintenance activities in Nigerian technical education institutions remain reactive, whereby repairs are carried out mainly after equipment failure has occurred. This practice contributes to increased equipment downtime, higher maintenance costs, disruption of instructional activities, and premature deterioration of expensive workshop and laboratory facilities. In addition, inadequate maintenance documentation, irregular servicing schedules, and limited adoption of computerized maintenance management systems weaken institutional capacity to sustain equipment functionality. Empirical studies indicate that organizations that adopt preventive maintenance, predictive maintenance, and computerized maintenance management systems achieve improved equipment reliability, reduced downtime, and enhanced operational performance compared with institutions that rely predominantly on corrective maintenance approaches (Muchiri et al., 2011; Eti et al., 2006).

The lack of adequately skilled technical personnel also presents a significant challenge to the effective management of instructional equipment. Contemporary training equipment incorporates complex technologies such as automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, computer numerical control (CNC), additive manufacturing, and IoT-enabled systems, which require specialized technical expertise for installation, operation, troubleshooting, calibration, and maintenance. However, many institutions lack sufficient numbers of qualified technologists, technicians, laboratory assistants, and engineering personnel capable of managing these advanced technological systems. The absence of continuous professional development and technical training limits the effective utilization of available equipment in institutions.

Technological obsolescence represents another major challenge affecting equipment sustainability. The rapid evolution of manufacturing technologies, automation and robotics, renewable energy technologies, artificial intelligence, and advanced production systems makes it increasingly difficult for institutions to maintain equipment that meets current industrial standards. Consequently, instructional equipment may become technologically outdated shortly after acquisition. However, many Nigerian technical education institutions continue to rely on outdated workshop and laboratory equipment due to limited funding and inadequate technological upgrade planning. The gap between institutional equipment and current industrial technologies negatively affects graduate employability and reduces the competitiveness of technical education institutions.

Therefore, sustainable equipment management requires periodic technology assessment, modernization programmes, and systematic equipment replacement strategies to ensure that instructional facilities remain aligned with emerging industrial standards (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2025).

Beyond operational challenges, inadequate institutional policy frameworks on equipment management remain a significant concern. Although substantial resources may be invested in equipment acquisition, many technical education institutions lack comprehensive policies relating to equipment planning, inventory management, preventive maintenance, modernization, replacement planning, risk management, and environmentally responsible disposal. The absence of standardized maintenance manuals, asset management guidelines, performance indicators, and replacement policies contributes to poor equipment management, weak accountability, and inefficient utilization of institutional resources. Technical institutions without well-developed equipment management policies often struggle to integrate procurement processes, maintenance practices, and sustainability objectives. Therefore, the development and implementation of comprehensive equipment management policies are essential for promoting effective governance, accountability, and consistent application of lifecycle management principles.

Industry collaboration represents another major challenge affecting technical education institutions. The effectiveness of technical education depends largely on continuous interaction between educational institutions and industries that utilize advanced production technologies. However, many institutions operate with limited collaboration with industry stakeholders. Effective partnerships can facilitate equipment donations, technology transfer, industrial attachment opportunities, collaborative research, technical advisory support, curriculum improvement, and staff professional development. Without strong industry collaboration, institutional workshops and laboratories may fail to reflect current industrial practices, while graduates may lack adequate exposure to emerging technologies used in modern workplaces.

These challenges are interconnected and often reinforce one another. Limited funding constrains equipment procurement, maintenance activities, staff capacity development, and modernization efforts. Poor procurement practices contribute to rapid equipment deterioration, while inadequate maintenance increases operational costs and equipment failures. Furthermore, shortages of technical personnel, weak institutional policies, and limited industry partnerships reduce institutional capacity to respond effectively to technological changes. Consequently, addressing only one challenge is unlikely to produce sustainable outcomes. Rather, Nigerian technical education institutions require an integrated approach to equipment management that combines sustainable procurement practices, lifecycle asset management, preventive maintenance systems,

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

digital asset monitoring, institutional policy development, technical capacity building, adequate funding, and industry collaboration.

Therefore, addressing these challenges is essential for improving equipment efficiency, extending equipment lifespan, strengthening practical skills development, and enhancing the quality and relevance of technical education in Nigeria. The interconnected nature of these challenges further reinforces the need for developing the Sustainable Equipment Acquisition and Management Framework proposed in this study.

Framework Contribution

Firstly, the suggested SEAMF is the primary conceptual contribution of the current research because it introduces the concept of integrated lifecycle management for instructional equipment in Nigerian technical colleges. As opposed to traditional methods that see equipment acquisition as a purely procurement process, the framework considers equipment management as an ongoing institutional process that includes planning, acquisition, utilization, maintenance, performance evaluation and sustainable replacement of equipment.

The framework contributes to the existing literature in four ways. Firstly, it combines the strategic objectives of institutions with their equipment management strategies in order to ensure that procurement processes are consistent with the needs of the curriculum, national TVET policy, industry needs and institutional sustainability strategy. The integration of these factors makes it possible for institutions to base equipment investment and utilization decisions on evidence.

Secondly, the framework is built on a lifecycle management concept by integrating such stages as equipment needs assessment, sustainable procurement, installation and integration of technology, digital monitoring of assets, preventive maintenance and human capacity building into one management process.

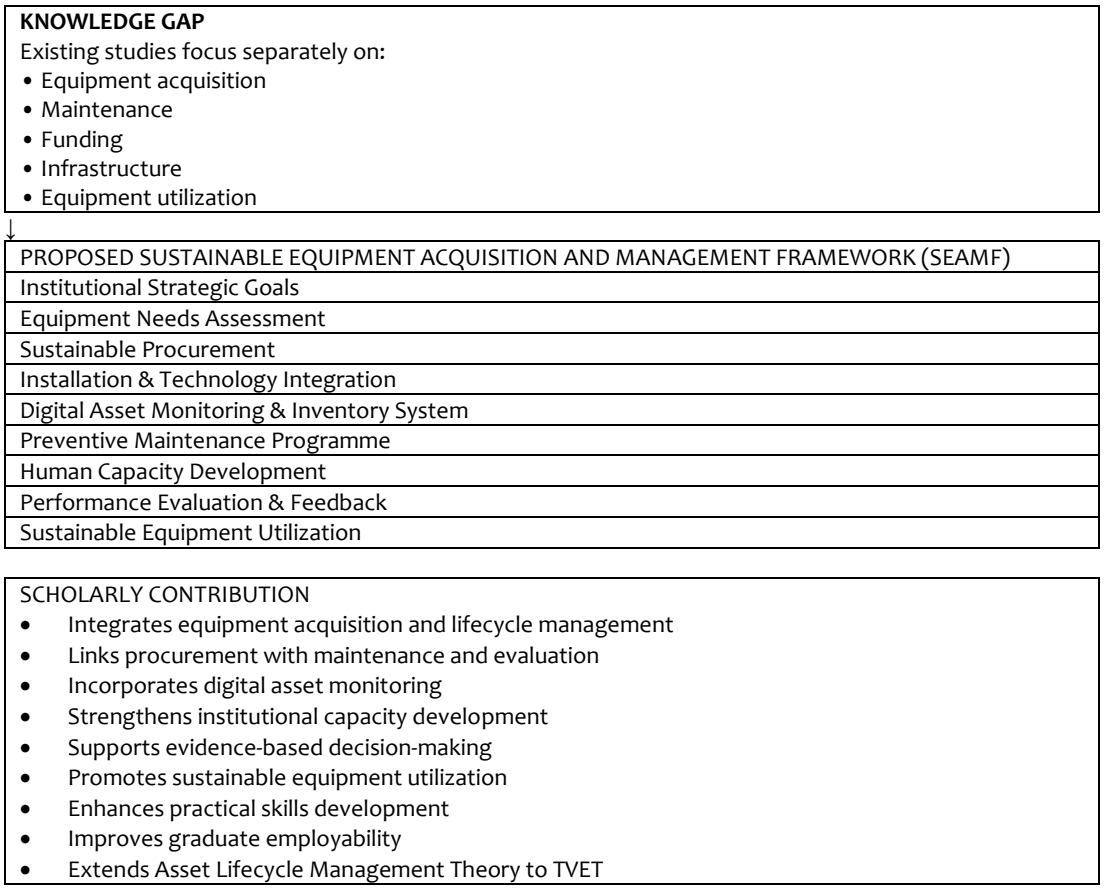
Thirdly, the framework presents digital asset monitoring and performance evaluation of such assets as key aspects of equipment management through the inclusion of computer-based asset inventories, maintenance records, equipment performance measures, and evaluation. As a result, the framework allows for evidence-based decision making, accountability, minimizes the risk of loss of equipment, facilitates timely maintenance and equipment modernization and replacement.

Lastly, the framework presents a mechanism of continuous feedback, which fosters learning and continuous improvement within an institution. The information gained from performance evaluation is used to enhance the strategic planning of the institution as the managers are able to assess procurement policies, develop maintenance schedules, build human capacity and make better decisions regarding the procurement of equipment in the future.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

Overall, the framework presents a holistic approach to the concept of equipment management by bringing together strategic planning, sustainable procurement, technology management, digital asset monitoring, preventive maintenance, building human capacity and continuous evaluation into one framework. Through the elimination of shortcomings of fragmented approaches to equipment management, the framework provides a practical guide for the enhancement of equipment reliability and longevity, skills acquisition, cost minimization, institutional productivity and producing graduates with skills that meet current industrial needs. It can thus be concluded that the framework is instrumental in the development of knowledge in technical education because it broadens the scope of application of the Asset Lifecycle Management Theory to the management of equipment used for instruction within the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). This framework will also serve as a tool for decision-making for the improvement of the sustainability of equipment acquisition and management in Nigerian technical institutions.

Figure 1: Conceptual Contribution of the Sustainable Equipment Acquisition and Management Framework (SEAMF)



Source: Developed by the Author (2026).

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

Methodological Approach

For this study, a conceptual review methodology will be used to formulate the Sustainable Equipment Acquisition and Management Framework for Technical Education Institutions in Nigeria. This is because a conceptual review methodology is appropriate for a study that seeks to compile existing body of knowledge; identify the gap between theoretical and practical issues; and formulate a conceptual model or framework without involving primary data collection processes. The methodology does not involve hypothesis testing via surveys or experimentation but the process involves synthesis of evidence from the literature to create a comprehensive framework that solves a problem both practically and theoretically. The framework was formulated through systematic review and analysis of contemporary literature on technical and vocational education and training (TVET); sustainable procurement; asset life-cycle management; equipment acquisition; equipment maintenance; digital asset management; preventive maintenance; human capacity development; and sustainability of educational infrastructures. Sources of literature include works by UNESCO-UNEVOC, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), Federal Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), International Organization for Standardization (ISO 55000 and ISO 20400), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as well as recent empirical literature on technical education, sustainable procurement, equipment maintenance and lifecycle asset management.

Discussion

The suggested model of Sustainable Equipment Acquisition and Management highlights the importance of using an integrated lifecycle management approach, rather than just the process of purchasing equipment for instruction facilities, to ensure equipment sustainability in technical education institutions. It is worth noting that the mere presence of the most advanced equipment is not enough for improving practical training results. Instead, the efficiency of equipment use will be provided through a combination of activities including planning, need assessment, sustainable procurement, integration of technologies, utilization, preventive maintenance, monitoring, capacity building, performance measurement, and continuous improvement. This viewpoint is consistent with international asset management principles, which emphasize that organizations achieve maximum value from physical assets through systematic lifecycle management rather than isolated acquisition activities (International Organization for Standardization [ISO], 2014; ISO, 2024).

Moreover, the framework demonstrates that sustainable equipment use depends not only on financial investment but also on institutional management capacity. In the absence of formalized preventive maintenance programmes, computerized monitoring

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

systems, routine equipment evaluation, and continuous training of technical personnel, even advanced instructional technologies may become underutilized, experience premature deterioration, or fail to support competency-based education effectively. This argument is particularly relevant to Nigerian technical education institutions, where challenges relating to inadequate maintenance practices, insufficient funding, limited technical expertise, and weak infrastructure management continue to affect the effectiveness of practical training. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2023) emphasized that sustainable Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems require effective management of infrastructure, continuous capacity development, and maintenance strategies to ensure that training facilities remain relevant and functional.

At the same time, the framework supports emerging trends in the scientific literature concerning the integration of sustainability, digital transformation, and Industry 4.0 technologies within technical education. Recent studies indicate that digital asset management, sustainable procurement, predictive maintenance, and technology-enhanced learning environments can improve equipment reliability, resource efficiency, skills development, operational cost management, and environmental sustainability (Javaid et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2021). The adoption of digital inventory systems, lifecycle costing approaches, preventive maintenance strategies, and human capacity development within a unified framework reflects contemporary approaches to sustainable infrastructure management in educational institutions and provides mechanisms for improving institutional resilience in the era of technological advancement.

Unlike previous studies that have examined equipment acquisition, funding constraints, maintenance practices, obsolete facilities, or equipment utilization as separate issues, the proposed framework integrates these dimensions into a comprehensive lifecycle management model. Existing research on TVET infrastructure management has largely focused on the availability and adequacy of instructional facilities, maintenance challenges, or the relationship between equipment availability and practical skills acquisition (Billett, 2011; UNESCO, 2022). Although these studies provide valuable insights, they often do not adequately explain the interrelationships among strategic planning, equipment needs assessment, sustainable procurement, technology adoption, digital monitoring, maintenance systems, personnel development, and performance evaluation throughout the entire equipment lifecycle. The current framework addresses this gap by establishing connections among these components and presenting a holistic approach to sustainable equipment management in technical education institutions.

In addition, the proposed framework aligns with current global and national efforts aimed at embedding sustainability principles within vocational and technical education systems. Sustainable TVET emphasizes the integration of technological innovation, environmental

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

sustainability, digital transformation, industry collaboration, and lifelong learning to prepare graduates for changing labour-market requirements. According to UNESCO (2022), effective TVET systems must continuously adapt their training environments, technologies, and institutional management practices to support sustainable development and employability. Similarly, the OECD (2023) noted that education systems that incorporate digital transformation and sustainability principles are better positioned to develop adaptable human resources and strengthen economic competitiveness. The framework also recognizes the importance of stakeholder collaboration in promoting technology transfer, equipment modernization, industry partnerships, and curriculum relevance within Nigerian technical education institutions.

Beyond its theoretical contribution, the framework provides practical implications for policymakers, institutional administrators, procurement officers, accreditation bodies, and development partners. Through the adoption of this framework, procurement decisions can become more evidence-based, equipment accountability can be strengthened through digital asset monitoring, maintenance expenditure can be reduced through preventive strategies, maintenance culture can be improved, and the operational efficiency of workshops and laboratories can be enhanced.

Consequently, the proposed Sustainable Equipment Acquisition and Management Framework provides a comprehensive pathway through which Nigerian technical education institutions can transition from a procurement-centred approach toward an integrated lifecycle management system. By combining strategic planning, sustainable procurement, technology utilization, digital asset management, preventive maintenance, human capacity development, stakeholder engagement, and performance evaluation within a single conceptual framework, the study contributes a practical and theoretical model capable of enhancing equipment sustainability, competency-based technical education delivery, and the overall quality of technical education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The acquisition and management of sustainable equipment are vital in efforts to boost the quality and efficiency of technical education in Nigeria. Challenges in relation to the provision of equipment for technical education in Nigeria cannot be said to arise out of mere problems associated with lack of effective procurement policies or modern infrastructure but rather also in relation to the poor equipment life-cycle management in terms of poor maintenance, lack of proper monitoring processes, insufficient skills and inadequate institutional support structures. Sustainable equipment acquisition will thus have to entail a change in approach from just being concerned about procurement of equipment to an approach which takes into account the whole equipment life cycle starting from acquisition through utilization, maintenance, evaluation to disposal.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

This paper advocates the use of a Sustainable Equipment Acquisition and Management Framework which encompasses the following elements: Strategic needs assessment, sustainable procurement, asset digital monitoring, preventive maintenance systems, human capacity development and stakeholder collaboration.

The implementation of the suggested framework will allow Nigeria's technical education institutions to benefit fully from their equipment acquisition, save money on operations and maintenance, and ensure effective provision of practical training. Besides, better equipment management will foster the development of skilled graduates equipped with adequate technical competencies and digital skills as well as industry readiness in the modern industrial landscape. This is in line with current global tendencies that focus on sustainable skill formation, technological innovations, and responsive technical and vocational education systems (UNESCO, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2024).

In conclusion, sustainable equipment management must be viewed not as an operational process but a priority area for all the institutions. Successful implementation of the framework will lead to the modernization of Nigerian technical education institutions and make them centers of modern workforce development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

i. There should be a need for technical education institutions to embrace systematic approaches to equipment planning and management to address some of the existing challenges of equipment acquisition, use, and maintenance. Equipment audit should be conducted in institutions to know the condition, functionality, relevancy, and replacement status of the current equipment before embarking on acquisition processes.

ii. Technical education institutions need to embrace sustainable procurement approaches that take into account the whole life cycle of the equipment which includes acquisition cost, installation, energy consumption, maintenance, availability of spare parts, technical support, and replacement. There should be technical expertise and other relevant stakeholders within the procurement committee of the institution to ensure proper equipment procurement.

iii. Technical education institutions need to develop computer-based equipment inventory and management systems that will make monitoring easier and enable good decision-making. Computer systems need to gather equipment information such as when the equipment was acquired, its location, whether the equipment is working, the maintenance it has gone through, utilization rates, and replacement dates.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. R. Rena [South Africa]

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
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