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## `Learn from the UK, make TVET glamorous`

The Star, Malaysia

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**PETALING JAYA:** Technical and vocational education training could do with a lot more exposure through the media, says National TVET Council member Howard Lee.

During a recent TV interview, the Ipoh Tumor MP explained that everything from documentaries to soap operas can have a place in "inspiring inspiration" for this alternative career path.

The food and beverage industry, for instance, became very popular when cooking shows took off in Britain in the late 1980s, arguably beginning with the appearance of Michelin-starred chef Marco Pierre White – Gordon Ramsay's teacher – on TV.

According to Lee, Britain's food and beverage industry (F&B) worked with film and documentary makers to meet increasing demand at the time. And today, we have any number of cooking shows and competitions globally, and even an award-winning fictional restaurant drama, *The*

*Bear*, with a huge following – all of which has made jobs in F&B glamorous.

"From creating a documentary series, the relative comfort in the economy of some TVET graduates, to the decent wages they get, we can highlight that and let people know, because I don't think people know," said Lee.

He called on creative minds to integrate TVET themes into their work, from subplots to main stories, and help highlight its incredible potential.

Lee added that the TVET model in Malaysia will also be different from other countries' models, as it needs to be based on our own needs and demands.

"We have a very different history to our needs and our demands, so we will see a transition of our current TVET system.

"There will be a kind of 'sand shifting' I would say, a different model altogether," he said about the new direction TVET in Malaysia will take.

Rather than training providers, TVET institutions will become



**Alluring industry:** The F&B industry benefits from shows like *'The Bear'*, starring Jeremy Allen White as a charismatic chef.

accreditation partners, while industries, factories, businesses, and corporations will be given the responsibility of training through internship programmes.

He added that such an approach is controversial but essential for understanding and meeting the demands of the global ecosystem, and it is a bold step that must be explored to shape our future.

Many in education say something must be done, following recent reports that many young

people, especially Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia school-leavers, are being driven to forgo higher education by the glamour of celebrity influencers on social media.

A study conducted by the UCSI University Poll Research Centre last month showed only 51% out of 1,000 SPM school-leavers aged 18 to 20 years planned to continue studying, while 39% chose to look for a job, while another 10% had no plans. Of those who did not wish to pursue their studies, 34% said they wanted to become influencers and social media affiliates, 26% were interested in the gig economy, 22% intended to start their own business, and another 8% had no future plans.

Penang Institute Publications Officer (publicity & publication) Dr Rahida Aini Mohd Ismail said she believes that it is time to customise the needs of the market with the TVET courses that are offered to students.

Offering a variety of courses related to market trends will help pique the interest of students while ensuring a reality check.

"We have to create more aware-

ness about TVET. Right now we are limited by the 'social stigma' towards TVET education.

"Parents emphasise academic achievement at schools rather than skills and interest, so if they are interested in filmmaking, how can we get them on board? If they want to become visual artists or scriptwriters, our film industry is lagging behind, we have many untold stories.

"Take South Korea for example, how they use their film industry to promote their products via placements on the shows that we love to watch."

An article by Universiti Kuala Lumpur titled "SPM Leavers: Why TVET Should Be Your Path to Success" pointed out that Malaysia is struggling to meet the demand for high-skilled workers, and this is hindering the country's economic progress.

"An immediate and radical shift is necessary, with increased emphasis on TVET to produce more high-skilled workers. Transforming Malaysia from a consumer nation to a producer nation requires prioritising this shift."



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### SUMMARIES

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