

Relevance of the Academic and Employment Outcomes of Graduates on their Certified Competencies under the Strengthened Technical-Vocational Education Program (STVEP) of the Department of Education

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Abstract: *In the school year 2007-2008, the Department of Education launched the Strengthened Technical-Vocational Education Program (STVEP) to develop graduates with technical-vocational and academic competencies. Competency assessment is conducted to students and successful candidates are provided with a Certificate of Competency (COC) or a National Certificate (NC). The relevance of the certified competencies on the graduates' academic and employment outcomes was conducted using a descriptive-survey design with a content-validated questionnaire. Results revealed that most respondents pursuing further academic education with certified competencies under the STVEP were not related to the course they are taking. Further, the competencies of the graduates were not relevant to their job, area of specialization, and job satisfaction. It is concluded that the acquired competencies of the Tech-Voc graduates in Biliran were not enough for a secured employment and were not needed by most of them in pursuing higher education. Strategic changes to strengthen competency-based curriculum must be done, and eventually provide high school graduates with more relevant skills and knowledge that are suitable for their academic and employment outcomes.*

Keywords: *STVEP, Competency, Academic and employment outcomes, National Certificates, Tech-Voc*

I. Introduction

Education, skills development and technical training are central to agricultural and rural employment. They prepare mostly young people for work in the formal and informal sector in rural areas and thus play an important role in poverty reduction (Hartl, 2009). In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has launched in school year 2007-2008 the Strengthened Technical-Vocational Education Program (STVEP). This program vitalized the Technical-Vocational Education (TVE) in 282 public secondary Tech-Voc schools in the country (DO 59, 2011; DO 67, 2012).

The STVEP, an effective strategy to properly address the perennial problem of poverty, is designed to provide utmost development of the individual as a total person equipped with technical-vocational and academic competencies, proper work ethics and desirable values that will make the person economically-stable, responsible, law-abiding, productive and competitive in the world of work (Rimando, 2012). All fourth year high school students under the program are mandated to undergo assessment, with support funds from the DepEd, before graduating and/or leaving the schools as a poverty alleviation measure (DO 95, 2009; DO 59, 2011).

When candidates submit for an assessment in a Competency Center accredited by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), a Certificate of Competency (COC) or a National Certificate at a specific level (NC I or NC II) is given to those who are competent. The certificates can be used as a passport in the world of work, for those graduates who intend to be employed. Other graduates can also opt to continue for higher education. This information, however, has less documentation and has not yet published in the case for Biliran Province. Hence, this study was conducted.

The main purpose of the study was to find out the relevance of the certified competencies of the Tech-Voc graduates on their academic and employment outcomes. Specifically, it aimed to determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, area of specialization, and level of qualification attained. Further, it sought to establish relationships of the graduates' certified competencies on their academic and employment outcomes using coefficient of correlation.

II. Methodology

The study used a descriptive-survey design using a content-validated questionnaire. This was subjected to graduates of five (5) Tech-Voc High Schools in the Province of Biliran (Maripipi National Vocational School: MNVS, Naval School of Fisheries: NSF, Biliran National Agricultural High School: BNAHS, Cabucgayan National School of Arts and Trades: CNSAT, and Culaba National Vocational School: CNVS).

These respondents were based on the copy provided by the TESDA Provincial office on the total graduates assessed and certified for a specific competency from school year 2009-2010 to 2012-2013. The distribution of questionnaire was conducted by tapping the respective Guidance Counselors of the five schools.

The obtained data were tabulated to determine the frequencies, means and percentages of the surveyed variables. The coefficient of correlation (r) between the respondents' certified competencies and their academic and employment outcomes was obtained at 0.05 level of significance.

III. Results And Discussion

Socio-Demographic Profile of the STVEP Graduates

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (Table 1) showed that most of them are within the age range of 17-18 (46.02%). This implies that majority of the respondents just graduated 1-2 years ago. The respondents are mostly female (55.78%) and single (96.81%). The high proportion of being single means that the respondents are still making preparations for a well-planned future and are pursuing their academic advancements.

On the area of the respondents' specialization, food processing majors constituted the highest proportion (19.72%) while driving was the least preferred major (0.20%). This is due to that fact that food processing is offered in all Tech-Voc high schools investigated. Driving, on the other hand, was not a priority competency within the core competencies in automotive offered by MNVS and CNSAT. Obtaining a certificate in driving is a personal initiative and can be done only at TESDA-CNSAT.

The respondents' level of National Certificates revealed that most of them are NC II holders upon graduation (53.39%) and only few (9.96%) failed to pass the qualifications assessed on them. This means that most respondents can perform a prescribed range of functions involving known routines and procedures where clearly identified choices and limited complexity applies. Those who failed in the assessment are advised for re-assessment to best prepare themselves in the competitive world of work.

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
23-24	6	1.20
21-22	43	8.57
19-20	146	29.08
17-18	231	46.02
15-16	76	15.14
Total	502	100
Sex		
Male	222	44.22
Female	280	55.78
Total	502	100
Civil Status		
Single	486	96.81
Married	16	3.19
Total	502	100
Area of Specialization		
Agri-Crop Production	59	11.75
Animal Production	36	7.17
Food Processing	99	19.72
Horticulture	44	8.77
Driving	1	0.20
Cooking/Foods	86	17.13
Carpentry	5	0.10
Bartending	7	1.39
Automotive	12	2.39
Drafting	6	1.20
Electricity	6	1.20
Beauty Care	9	1.79
PC Operation	11	2.19
Garments	5	0.10
Fish Capture	52	10.36
Aquaculture	64	12.75
Total	502	100
Level of Competency		
None	50	9.96
COC	97	19.32
NC I	87	17.33
NC II	268	53.39
Total	502	100

Academic Outcomes of STVEP Graduates

Majority of the respondents (60.37%) were enrolled at the Naval State University-Main Campus (Table 2). This implies that the respondents' course preferences were accessible at the said university, where 22.08 % and 19.95% (highest proportion) took up Bachelor of Elementary and Secondary Education, respectively. This can be explained by a possibility that many schools in the province will need teachers because of the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum. Consequently, most respondents pursuing further academic education (72.87%) told that their qualified competency under the STVEP was not related to the course they are taking at present. This suggests that respondents have to undertake additional competencies, aside from those acquired under the STVEP. This is supported by significant effect of the "area of specialization of the respondents" on their educational endeavor ($r = 0.37$; computed value= 2.07; tabulated value=2.052).

Table 2. Academic outcomes of the STVEP graduates in Biliran

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
College/ University Enrolled		
Naval State University - Main	227	60.37
Naval State University – Biliran Campus	73	19.42
Leyte Normal University	19	5.05
Eastern Visayas State University	13	3.46
Asian Development College	1	0.27
Visayas State University	2	0.53
St. Paul Business School	2	0.53
Our Lady of Angels Seminary	1	0.27
Cebu Technological University	3	0.80
AMA Computer Learning Center	3	0.80
Northwest Samar State University	1	0.27
Holy Infant College	1	0.27
Far Eastern University	2	0.53
University of the Philippines - Tacloban	1	0.27
Feati University	1	0.27
MNVS/Senior HS	9	2.39
University of san Jose Recoletos – Cebu	3	0.80
TESDA – CNSAT	1	0.27
Palompom Institute of Technology	1	0.27
NSF/Senior HS	10	2.66
University of San Carlos	1	0.27
La Salle University	1	0.27
Total	376	100
Courses		
BS Animal Husbandry	25	6.65
BSED	75	19.95
BEED	83	22.08
HRTM	39	10.37
BS Criminology	41	10.90
BS Maritime	40	10.64
BS Accountancy	4	1.06
BS Engineering	19	5.05
BS Philosophy	2	0.53
BSBA	26	6.92
BSIT	10	2.66
BS Nursing	3	0.80
Food Processing	9	2.39
Total	376	100
Relevance of National Competency Certificate obtained		
YES	102	27.13
NO	274	72.87
Total	376	100

Employment Outcomes of STVEP Graduates

The employment outcomes of the respondents (Table 3) revealed that nine (9) of them were working as salesgirls, laborer in a water refilling station, office aide, and as a conductor of a vehicle. It further showed that the competencies of the graduates were not relevant to their job, area of specialization, and job satisfaction. Further, the competency qualification of the respondents has no significant effect on their employment opportunities ($r=0.4$; computed value=1.85; tabulated value=2.101). This implies that the nature of work which the respondents engaged in does not require sternly the competency they acquired under the STVEP. In a study conducted by ERNWACA (2013), 20.2% of the Technical-Vocational Education Training (TVET) graduates in Gambia stated that their job was not the same as that for which they were trained. This was explained by a

mismatch between training providers output and job requirements in the field, which can be the case in Biliran Province.

Table 3. Employment outcomes of the STVEP graduates in Biliran

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Nature of Employment		
Part time	1	11.11
Temporary	5	55.56
Contractual	2	22.22
Job Order	1	11.11
Total	9	100
Degree of the Application and Specialization		
YES		
Slightly Related	1	11.11
NOT RELATED	8	88.89
No job Opportunity related to Specialization		
Total	9	100
Job Satisfaction		
YES		
Good social climate/work setting	1	11.11
NO		
No job security	8	88.89
Total	9	100
Relevance of National Competency Certificate		
YES	1	11.11
NO	8	88.89
Total	9	100

IV. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the certified competencies of the high school graduates in Biliran under the STVEP were not enough for a secured employment and were not necessary for their enrollment in college except for those who were enrolled to a course along Tech-Voc education and training. Authorities are suggested to orchestrate strategic changes to strengthen competency-based curriculum and eventually provide graduates with relevant skills and knowledge that will equip them in their employment and academic endeavors within the province.

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