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RESEARCH ARTICLE

READINESS OF TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL AND LIVELIHOOD (TVL) STUDENTS OF SIMPUCAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

The study assessed the level of readiness of TVL students from Simpucan National High School. It involved TVL students specializing in Housekeeping and employers from partner establishments within Puerto Princesa City. The data were gathered using descriptive design through the self-made and adapted questionnaire that gauged the level of readiness of the students and employers. Findings showed that the students are well-prepared across four key domains: personal, social, communication, and technical skills, and when it comes to the level of readiness of students by employers indicates that certain areas could be targeted for further development to enhance skills. The study could be an eye-opener to all teachers, partner institutions, administrators, and researchers in quality TVL education. Furthermore, the result of this study may be used in enhancing some aspects of the TVL programs of sustainable implementation.

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INTRODUCTION

The offering of technical vocational education in various schools aimed to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to choose middle-level employment after graduation. This study aims to serve as a guide to school administrators for them to implement the program despite the challenges effectively. Ramos (2021) cited that educated and skilled individuals are the foundation of a strong economy and valuable problem-solvers. While education serves multiple purposes, it primarily prepares students to be well-rounded, critical thinkers, competent employees, and global citizens capable of competing in the workforce. While this may be the case, the COVID-19 pandemic created protocol issues and interrupted the delivery of technical vocational education. The readiness of schools, local government units (LGUs), and industries to support the implementation of the Senior High School (SHS) TVL Track could be more optimal. Specifically, school administrators expressed needing more time regarding facilities and

equipment for the SHS TVL Track. At the same time, according to Caballero et al. (2015), LGUs and industries are only partially ready to support its implementation.

Employers increasingly seek workers with behavioral skills such as teamwork, diligence, creativity, and entrepreneurship in today's economy. Workers also need personal attributes like work ethics and problem-solving skills. Rayan (2015) noted that focusing solely on technical and vocational skills in TVET will not guarantee employability. Many youths still lack work skills, leading to unemployment, insecurity, loss of lives and properties, and chaos. The literature reviewed suggests that TVET, backed by the availability of materials, infrastructure, hard and soft skills, and government support, could be the vital solution to the employability problem that Shefiu et al. (2019) concluded.

The TVL track in secondary education is recognized for equipping students with practical skills and competencies essential for various industries and careers. As TVL programs continue to gain prominence in the educational landscape, there is a growing interest in understanding students' readiness on this educational pathway. The readiness of TVL students encompasses a range of factors, including academic preparedness, technical skills proficiency, career aspirations, and socio-economic background, all of which significantly influence their educational journey and prospects.

While numerous studies have explored students' readiness in various educational contexts, there still needs to be a gap in the current understanding specific to TVL students. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the readiness of TVL student, shedding light on their preparedness levels, and identifying potential areas for improvement and intervention. By delving into the factors influencing student readiness, this research aims to contribute to the existing knowledge on TVL education and inform educational practices and policies to enhance the quality and relevance of TVL programs.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive design to determine the readiness of TVL students of Simpucan National High School, a public secondary school. The study's respondents comprised TVL students and employers. It employed a quantitative descriptive design utilizing an evaluative technique to determine the readiness level of all Simpucan National High School students. This descriptive approach dealt with quantitative frequency, percentage, and mean data and the adjectival equivalence of the value.

The questionnaire for the students consists of the student's employability level. It focused on the student's employability level, while employers focused on the student's employability level. All students were provided with a questionnaire and were given instructions before completing the questionnaire. The instrument focused on the statement of the problem, which sought to answer the readiness of TVL students in Simpucan National High School. Before the researchers collected the data, permission letters were sent to the research adviser and school head to ask for permission in data gathering. While conducting the data, the researchers produced the survey questionnaire for their respondents as tools. After gathering data, formulating questions appropriate for the study, and making all necessary modifications to the chosen respondents, copies of the questionnaires were distributed, completed, and returned. The corresponding answers to the questions were kept, following the agreement of the respondents and the researchers for the validity and reliability of the study. The data gathered was organized and tabulated according to the

result of the statistical treatment applied. The study employed descriptive statistical tools for data analysis, utilizing measures such as mean scores.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results presented herein offer an understanding of various aspects of student readiness regarding four domain skills: personal skills, social skills, communication skills, and technical skills, encompassing academic preparedness, technical skills proficiency, and career aspirations. Through quantitative analyses, we unveil patterns, trends, and disparities that characterize the readiness landscape among TVL students at our school. Moreover, the following discussion probes deeper into the implications of these findings, clarifying their significance for educational stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and the community. By contextualizing the results within the broader framework of TVL education, we aim to address the identified challenges and leverage opportunities for enhancing the quality and relevance of TVL programs.

Table 1. Level of Readiness of TVL Students in Four Domain Skills

SKILLS	MS	VI
A. Personal Skills	4.13	VG
B. Social Skills	4.24	VG
C. Communication Skills	4.34	VG
D. Technical Skills	4.43	VG
Overall Mean	4.28	VG

Legend: MS = Mean Score; VI = Verbal Interpretation

4.51-5.00 = Excellent (E)

3.51-4.50 = Very Good (VG)

2.51-3.50 = Good (G)

1.51-2.50 = Fair (F)

1.00-1.50 = Poor (P)

The overall mean score in the personal skills is (4.13), interpreted as "Very Good" (VG). This shows that students have a high level of personal skills related to readiness, with attributes such as understanding the need for career flexibility, reporting to work on time, and demonstrating verbal interpretation reliability being rated highly. It indicates the success of the TVL curriculum in instilling a strong sense of professionalism and work ethic in students.

Thus, the result is a good sign that students are instilling a strong sense of professionalism and work ethic that was supported by JobStreet (2018). data from a job-search website that the DOLE said companies tend to prioritize applicants who show a willingness to learn, practice personal grooming, and can work in a team. Employers also value those who show punctuality, go beyond the call of duty, can handle stress, have leadership potential, have efficient task management, exhibit customer empathy, and have a sense of initiative. The students demonstrate these traits during their work immersion. This supports Machmud (2018) states that the perception of completing a job is self-efficacy. Moreover, self-efficacy relates to someone's confidence in achieving his/her duties in uncertainty. That was also cited by Domenech-Betoret et al. (2017), who defined self-efficacy as "an individual's belief in his or her ability to organize and implement action to produce the desired achievements and results." Self-efficacy is one's faith in accomplishing the task. Learners automatically adjust and adopt the new environment they are in for them to finish the immersion program while developing their efficiency (Pamitan et al., 2018).

The mean score for the social skills domain is (4.24), also interpreted as "Very Good." This verbal interpretation shows that TVL students possess highly developed social skills, such as understanding the needs of others, identifying sources of conflict, and demonstrating cooperative behavior. These skills foster harmonious working relationships and contribute to a positive work environment. Malecki and Elliot (2002) support this finding that students' opportunities to learn effectively will likely diminish greatly without social skills. Besides good table manners and thank you, social skills include many learning-related skills that allow students to study independently, work in groups, build and maintain friendships, and respond appropriately to adult feedback and correction.

Manning (2007) also added that some students failed to have successful and positive academic success because of low self-concept. Self-concept refers to the student's perception of competence or adequacy in academic and non-academic domains and is best represented by a self-perception profile across domains. The communication skills domain has a mean score of (4.34), placing it in the "Very Good" category. Notably, respecting others' points of view and listening to others when communicating both received an "Excellent" verbal interpretation. This entails that TVL students have strong communication skills, particularly respectful and attentive listening. These skills are critical in the modern workplace, where clear and effective communication can greatly enhance productivity and teamwork.

The ability to communicate clearly and concisely with staff, guests, and other industry professionals is crucial to the success of any hospitality business. Those who can effectively communicate their vision and expectations to their team are more likely to achieve results than those who cannot. Effective communication is important in the hospitality industry because it improves in-house relationships among workers and between employees and customers. It also promotes inclusivity, as staff members and customers are treated like individuals, listened to, and communicated according to their needs.

According to Morreale and Pearson (2008), effective communication skills should be taught in educational systems. Language and Communication skills are recognized as important elements in the education of the modern generation. Personality development only remains complete if the communication skills are addressed. Effective communication demands proper knowledge of English grammar, accent, and pronunciation. Words should be handled carefully so that the intended meaning is interpreted. A command of English and good communication skills are necessary to attain this language proficiency. Communicative competence refers to knowledge and the skill of using this knowledge when interacting in actual communication. Effective communication is a must in this era of globalization. It combines effective listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Effective communication enables one to establish and maintain personal and professional relations successfully. Lastly, the technical skills domain achieved a mean score of (4.43), considered "Very Good." Notably, demonstrating the ability to operate machines needed on the job and handling the details of the work assigned received an "Excellent" verbal interpretation. These verbal interpretations indicate that TVL students are well-prepared regarding job-specific technical skills. These skills and their excellent personal, social, and communication skills make them highly employable.

Thus, the result was supported by the literature of Gilmore and Smith (2008), promoting children's learning is the greatest aim of universities and assessment. Students undergo a majorly wide scope of assessment throughout their educational years, from early childhood through primary and intermediate schools into secondary school and beyond. Students

have recognized some evaluations as such; others are closely relevant to learning expertise that some would not be visible, and students are unconscious that they were being evaluated. Continuous feedback from employers and attention to changes in industry requirements will be important in this ongoing curriculum development and refinement process. Table 2. below presents employers' level of readiness of TVL students, organized into four key skill areas: Personal Skills, Social Skills, Communication Skills, and Technical Skills.

Table 2. Level of Readiness of TVL Students by Employers

SKILLS	MS	VI
A. Personal Skills	4.20	VG
B. Social Skills	4.46	VG
C. Communication Skills	4.28	VG
D. Technical Skills	4.50	VG
Overall Mean	4.37	VG

Legend: MS = Mean Score; VI = Verbal Interpretation

4.51-5.00 = Excellent (E)

3.51-4.50 = Very Good (VG)

2.51-3.50 = Good (G)

1.51-2.50 = Fair (F)

1.00-1.50 = Poor (P)

The overall score in the Personal Skills category was (4.20), classified as 'Very Good'. 'Understanding the need for career flexibility and adaptability' and 'Reporting to work on time' stood out as strengths rated 'Excellent.' 'Functioning well in stressful situations' and 'Observing organizational policies', though rated as 'Very Good,' fell on the lower end within this category, hinting towards areas where further emphasis on training and development might be beneficial. The implication for education is to incorporate more aspects of stress management, time management, and understanding of organizational policies in the curriculum, enhancing these areas of personal skill development.

The Social Skills category had an overall score of (4.46), classified as 'Very Good.' Students excelled particularly in 'Understanding the needs of others', 'Displaying a friendly and cooperative spirit,' and 'Showing compassion to guests and co-immersionists', all rated 'Excellent.' 'Accepting constructive criticism' was the weakest point in this category, though still rated 'Very Good,' signaling the need to focus more on fostering receptiveness to feedback within the educational context.

According to Hochwarter et al. (2004), Social skills, or the ability to effectively interact with others, are becoming increasingly important for organizations as more team-based arrangements are used and more service-oriented jobs are employed. It can be regarded as personality traits or capabilities contributing to psychosocial outcomes. Strong social skills can facilitate interpersonal interactions, which can, in turn, lead to effective job outcomes. Although the change in organizational structures and the importance of social skills have heightened awareness of social skills in organizational outcomes, little is known about social skill and their role in influencing work outcomes.

In the study of Ferris et al. (2002), individual interactions are one factor in attaining goals in any field. The current study is an example of a growing awareness that social skills are multidimensional and multifaceted. Therefore, we will try to familiarize it and then survey outcomes of social skills in organizations. Patrick (2008) identified the importance of social skills because they allow us to interact with each other with predictability so that we can more readily understand each other and be understood. With an agreed-upon social way of interacting, it is easier to prevent misunderstandings. We need to be able to interact with clarity.

Furthermore, the other study that lists the importance of social skills was supported by Flowers (2008) that social skills encourage positive interactions and avoid or terminate negative ones. There are many benefits of social interaction. For example, participating in social activities could cause you to have feelings such as belonging, acceptance, and confidence. Added to the study of Pettry (2006), social activities can help you make friends, feel good about yourself, and do many things you could not do on your own, such as win a team sport or complete a major project.

For Communication Skills, the overall mean score was (4.28), a 'Very Good' verbal interpretation. The areas of 'Following oral, visual, and written directions' and 'Using relevant knowledge, know-how, and skills to explain and clarify thoughts and ideas' stood out with an 'Excellent' verbal interpretation. However, 'Demonstrating clear, effective written and oral communication skills' and demonstrating good listening and responding techniques' were on the lower end of this category, though still 'Very Good.' This shows a possible need to bolster these communication aspects within the TVL program, encouraging more practice of verbal and written communication and active listening techniques.

The result of the study shows the literature of Doyle (2019) that communication skills are important which are essential to the success of the workplace, which is listening, non-verbal communication, clarity and conciseness, friendliness, confidence, empathy, open-mindedness, respect, feedback, and selecting right medium. In contrast, developing those skills is regarded as one of the major aspects of developing good communication skills. Therefore, communication skills are regarded as meaningful to carry out one's job duties well and achieve the desired goals and objectives.

Lastly, in the Technical Skills category, the students were 'Very Good' overall, scoring (4.50). Particularly, students showed an 'Excellent' level of ability in 'Demonstrating the ability to operate machines needed on the job,' 'Handling the details of the work assigned to them,' 'Showing flexibility in the process of going through their task,' 'Manifesting thoroughness and precise attention to detail,' 'Fully understanding the linkages or connection between their tasks to be previous, intervening, and subsequent tasks,' and 'Group planning and decision-making.' Despite these strengths, 'Usually coming up with sound showing for problems,' 'Responding effectively to difficult/challenging behavior,' 'Developing and practicing negotiation skills,' and 'Being able to show technical competencies based on their specialization' fell on the lower end of the spectrum, indicating potential areas of improvement. Implications for education involve incorporating more problem-solving scenarios, negotiation exercises, and specialized technical practice into the curriculum.

Thus, in the study of Gibb (2004), the characteristics of the work world and workforce qualification needed by industry in the era of a knowledge-based economy today have been changing rapidly. One of the main characteristics of a knowledge-based industry is the growing demand for generic skills and attributes that the workers must own. In addition, according to the study of Cairney (2000), workers must also have generic and technical skills in the field. The study states that the industry in the era of a knowledge-based economy requires workers who can work independently, manage themselves, work in teams, adapt to change, solve complex problems, and think creatively and innovatively. The study of Cavanagh (2005) shows that almost all aspects of high school reform center on the critical role education must play in influencing the economic development of our rapidly changing society.

The American College Testing (2006) supported the result by looking at skills required for employment success, comparing these results to tests that measure work readiness and college readiness, and then determining if the performance levels needed for college and workforce readiness were the same or different. Their results showed that the landscape has rapidly changed from just a few years ago, making it critical that high school students possess the ability to adapt to and sustain meaningful employment.

According to the Department of Education (DepEd), No. 24 series of 2022 adopts the enclosed Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) that aims to provide a strategic roadmap for the Department to follow to improve the delivery and quality of basic education and the experience of learners in the basic education learning environment and to address the immediate impacts of pandemic on learning and anticipate the future of education and introduce innovation in fostering resiliency and embedding the rights of children and the youth in education. With that, it helps the learners to have readiness soon. Tracer studies must be done to evaluate the TVL implementation (Pentang et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The readiness of students pursuing TVL education plays a pivotal role in their academic success and future career prospects. Understanding the factors influencing their readiness levels is crucial for educational institutions to effectively tailor their programs and support services to meet the diverse needs of students. This study investigates the readiness of TVL students, examining various factors such as academic preparedness, technical skills, and career aspirations. By exploring the implications of the findings, this research seeks to inform educational practices, policy development, and interventions to enhance the quality and relevance of TVL education. Through a comprehensive analysis of student readiness, this study endeavors to advance TVL education and the holistic development of Simpucan National High School students.

The school administrators should conduct regular supervision and monitoring of teachers to assist in learning delivery and send TVL Teachers to attend training and technical skills so that they will be able to teach up-to-date needed skills, conduct interventions/orientation/seminars/supplementary activities that enhance the students writing, reading and oral skills such as public speaking and the like, encourage their teachers to conduct activities that strengthen the student's communication skills. The partner institution should prepare students to accelerate careers in the industry to increase their employability level, provide them with better insights for their career planning to align with their skills, preferences, and values, and enlighten every learner on the reality of the workplace and allow students to gain real-world experience in a professional environment so that they can learn new skills, network with professionals, and better understand the industry they are interested in.

The students need to further engage themselves in written and public speaking, participate in stress handling and constructive criticism to enhance training and skills, participate in supplementary oral reading and essay writing activities, and practice or study relaxation methods to cope with stress in the environment. They should have an active and holistic involvement in any activities, orientation, and seminars about communication activities inside the classroom. Parallel studies with a wider population and further studies on the employment readiness of students of the TVL strand may be conducted. Tracing these students as future graduates may also be relevant in determining the effectiveness of the TVL program.

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