

## **Work Immersion footprints: Impact on the job readiness and skills development of Senior High School TVL students**

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### ABSTRACT

This study explored the footprints of the Work Immersion Program on job readiness, skills development, and educational experiences among Senior High School Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students at Pulpogan National High School during the 2024–2025 academic year. Employing a quantitative descriptive research design with 32 respondents, the study assessed students' competencies, work ethics, values, job readiness, and skills development through validated questionnaires. Findings revealed that while the program was highly effective in developing competencies (WM=3.62), work ethics (WM=3.58), and values (WM=3.61), students perceived only moderate job readiness (WM=2.74), particularly in technical skills (WM=2.72). A significant negative correlation emerged between perceived program impact and job readiness ( $r=-0.984$ ), suggesting that increased awareness of workplace demands may lower their sense of preparedness. The study further identified gaps in industry alignment and application of technical skills. To address these findings, the study recommends a comprehensive Action Plan focused on enhanced technical training through quarterly workshops, expanded industry partnerships via MOUs with local businesses, career readiness seminars, annual curriculum reviews with industry input, and systematic program monitoring. This plan aims to bridge the gap between classroom learning and actual workplace requirements. The results underscore the need for targeted interventions to transform the Work Immersion Program into a more robust career preparation platform, thereby enhancing TVL graduates' employability in competitive job markets while aligning program improvements DepEd Order No. 30, s. 2017 guidelines.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Technical-Vocational Livelihood (TVL) track in senior high schools aims to equip students with practical skills for employment after graduation. Work immersion programs are a crucial component of TVL, providing students with hands-on experience in real-world work environments (Mendoza, 2024). However, a significant gap persists in the global literature regarding the consistent implementation and effectiveness of these programs. While some studies highlight the positive impact of work immersion on skill development, other research indicates challenges in ensuring that students are adequately prepared for the workforce. These challenges include a lack of readiness in terms of work ethics, workplace safety, and conflict resolution, which are crucial for successful work immersion experiences (Depeña, 2024). Moreover, the varying perceptions among students, teachers, and industry partners regarding the implementation of work immersion programs suggest a need for more cohesive and standardized approaches to ensure that students are truly gaining the necessary skills and competencies (Jaime, 2023). In the Philippines, the TVL track aims to address the need for a skilled workforce by providing students with specialized training and industry exposure (Abejero, 2021). Studies have shown that students in the TVL program demonstrate high levels of competence in basic, common, and core skills. However, the effectiveness of work immersion in developing these skills is still inconsistent. Research indicates that while students may perform well in terms of personal, interpersonal, and self-management skills, there is a low correlation between work immersion implementation and the actual acquisition of these competencies. Furthermore, several studies have indicated a moderate relationship between the extent of work immersion implementation and student satisfaction, suggesting that while students are generally satisfied with the program, there is room for improvement in the delivery and supervision of work immersion experiences. There is a need to assess and enhance the work immersion program to ensure that it is aligned with the needs of industries and that students are fully prepared for employment (Jaime, 2023).

Despite the global and national efforts to strengthen TVL programs through work immersion, localized studies examining specific challenges at the school level, such as at Pulpogan National High School, remain scarce. Within the local context of Pulpogan National High School in Cebu Province, the schools are implementing the national TVL curriculum. This study focuses on the general experiences and challenges in TVL programs, such as students' engagement and challenges and the overall readiness of students in work immersion programs. This gap in local context-specific research suggests a need for targeted studies that examine the unique factors influencing the work immersion programs at Pulpogan National High School. There is a need to investigate the specific challenges and opportunities within these schools in

order to provide a tailored approach to enhance the effectiveness of the TVL program in preparing students for future employment.

### Statement of the problem

This study determined the impact of the work immersion program on the job readiness and skills development of senior high school students in Pulpogan National High School, District of Consolacion II, for the school year 2024–2025, as a basis for an action plan. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the students in terms of age, sex, TVL major, and partner institution assigned for work immersion?
2. What is the extent of the work immersion program's impact on the students' competencies, work ethics, and relevant values?
3. What is the level of job readiness of the work immersion students in terms of work readiness, use of skills, status of employment, and alignment of track?
4. What is the perception of the respondents regarding the skills development of work immersion students in terms of work habits, work skills, social skills, personal skills, and technical skills?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the learners' demographic profile and their level of job readiness?
6. Is there a significant correlation between the work immersion program and the students' job readiness and skills development?
7. What challenges or factors affect the effectiveness of the work immersion program as perceived by the respondents?
8. Based on the findings of the study, what action plan can be proposed to enhance the implementation of the work immersion program?

### METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative–descriptive and survey research design, employing both researcher-made and modified survey questionnaires to assess respondents' perceptions of the level of impact of the work immersion program, students' job readiness, and skills development. The descriptive research design is appropriate for systematically describing a population, situation, or phenomenon, and is particularly useful for analyzing variable relationships without manipulating the environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Survey methods are commonly used in descriptive studies to gather data efficiently from a large number of respondents, making them suitable for educational research focused on perceptions and self-reported behaviors (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019).

The study was conducted at Pulpogan National High School located at Pulpogan, Consolacion Cebu. It took 10 minutes to reach the center of the research location from Consolacion Municipal Hall. Pulpogan is a barangay in the municipality of Consolacion, Cebu. Its population as determined by the 2020 Census was 14,700. This represented 9.93% of the total

population of Consolacion. Pulpogan National High School sat on a generous expanse of 3, 161 square meters.

The main instrument used in gathering the data was the researcher-made survey questionnaire based on DepEd Order No. 30 s. 2017 and modified questionnaire from Acut (2021) on the level of effectiveness of immersion program and Garcia and Yazon (2020) for the perception of respondents on students' job readiness and skills development. It utilized a questionnaire consisting of four parts which were manually collated in tables for interpretation purposes. The questionnaire has four (4) parts namely: Part I is the questionnaire for demographic profile to determine the students' age, sex, TVL major enrolled and partner institution during the work immersion. Part II is the respondent's perception on the level of impact of immersion program. Part III is the assessment of the respondents on the level of job readiness and Part IV is the assessment of the respondents on the students' level of skills development.

The following steps were followed to go through the data gathering. Pre-Gathering Stage. Before the actual data collection, a formal letter of request was prepared and addressed to the school principal of Pulpogan National High School, District of Consolacion II. The letter sought permission to conduct the study and administer the research questionnaire to school partner agencies or industries participating in the work immersion program. Upon approval, coordination with the Work Immersion Coordinators and school authorities was established to discuss the purpose of the study, ethical considerations, and logistical arrangements for distributing the survey. A briefing was also conducted with the focal persons to ensure proper facilitation of the questionnaire. Gathering Stage. Once permission was granted, the questionnaire was distributed to the partner agencies or industries and work immersion program focal persons. The distribution was done in coordination with the assigned teachers or facilitators to ensure smooth administration. Instructions were clearly explained to the respondents to ensure accurate and reliable responses. The participants were given ample time to carefully read and answer the questionnaire. If necessary, clarifications or guidance were provided while ensuring that respondents' answers remained unbiased and independent.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved thirty-two (32) senior high school students from Pulpogan National High School, District of Consolacion II, all enrolled in the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track under the Home Economics strand during the school year 2024–2025. The data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire designed to assess the demographic profile of the respondents, the impact of the work immersion program, and its relationship to students' job readiness and skills development. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and weighted mean were used to describe the data, while correlation analysis determined the significance of relationships between the variables.

### Demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic analysis provides a foundation for understanding students' experiences and readiness in the work immersion program. The results show that most respondents were aged

18–19 years old (68.76%), followed by those aged 16–17 (18.75%), 20–21 (6.25%), and 22 and above (6.24%). This indicates that the majority of the participants belong to the typical age range for Grade 12 completers, implying that most students progressed regularly through the curriculum with minimal academic delay. In terms of sex, there were more male students (62.50%) than female students (37.50%), revealing a predominance of males in the TVL track. This pattern aligns with findings from Philippine and international studies, which have shown that technical-vocational programs are often male-dominated due to persistent gendered perceptions of career suitability. The concentration of male enrollees highlights the need for more gender-inclusive strategies to encourage female participation in technical and vocational education.

Regarding specialization, all 32 respondents (100%) were enrolled in the Home Economics strand, indicating a singular focus within the TVL program of the school. This uniformity suggests institutional prioritization of Home Economics, possibly influenced by community demands, resource availability, and employment opportunities in related sectors such as hospitality, culinary arts, and services. However, the lack of other strands, such as ICT, Industrial Arts, or Agri-Fishery, limits program diversity and may reinforce traditional gender associations linked to Home Economics. Additionally, all students (100%) underwent work immersion in private institutions, signifying exclusive reliance on private-sector partnerships. While private institutions often offer structured and industry-aligned training environments, the absence of public or NGO partners highlights a missed opportunity for diversified exposure to different workplace settings and professional cultures.

The demographic trend of predominantly male respondents within the typical senior high school age and exclusive enrollment in Home Economics under private-sector immersion suggests that the school's TVL program is both focused and targeted. However, it underscores the need to expand program offerings and strengthen partnerships to ensure inclusivity and holistic industry exposure. These findings mirror the results of Lagrada et al. (2024) and Roble (2023), who found that TVL students' demographics—especially age, sex, and strand—significantly influence readiness, competency development, and employability.

#### Extent of work immersion program impact

The work immersion program aims to bridge academic learning with practical workplace experience. In this study, its impact was examined in terms of competencies, work ethics, and relevant values. Results show that students rated the program as “Highly Impactful” across all three domains, with aggregate weighted means of 3.62 for competencies, 3.58 for work ethics, and 3.61 for relevant values, all within the range of 3.5–4.0.

In terms of competencies, students perceived the program as highly impactful in developing teamwork, punctuality, adherence to workplace policies, and gaining practical experience, all of which were rated above 3.5. The highest-rated indicators include working collaboratively with team members (WM = 3.69), consistent punctuality (WM = 3.66), and the ability to follow procedures and work under pressure (WM = 3.63). The aggregate weighted mean of 3.62 demonstrates that the program effectively enhanced essential workplace competencies such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability. These findings align with

Dela Cruz et al. (2020) and Patino (2023), who affirmed that work immersion fosters employability skills and professionalism.

In terms of work ethics, the program received an aggregate weighted mean of 3.58, signifying a “Highly Impactful” effect. The highest mean score (3.71) was attributed to the program’s success in helping students develop lifelong values and professional behavior during the transition from school to work. Other highly rated indicators include compliance with documentation, reporting, and the appreciation of learned theories in practice, all scoring above 3.6. Only one item, regarding students’ ability to apply previous training in social contexts, was rated “Averagely Impactful” (3.16), suggesting that while ethical awareness was strong, opportunities for social application were slightly limited. The results confirm Cortes (2023) and DepEd (2017) findings that immersion significantly develops responsibility, honesty, and discipline among learners.

For relevant values, the program was also perceived as “Highly Impactful” (WM = 3.61), with top ratings for understanding job market expectations (3.69), teamwork (3.66), and developing confidence and self-esteem (3.63). Only one indicator—gaining cultural competence through reflection—was rated “Averagely Impactful” (3.47), showing that while values formation was strong overall, intercultural exposure could be enhanced. These results indicate that the work immersion program not only builds employable skills but also nurtures essential personal and ethical values such as teamwork, professionalism, and confidence. Similar findings were reported by Garcia et al. (2023), who concluded that immersion experiences foster critical values needed for lifelong learning and professional success.

#### Level of job readiness of Work Immersion students

Students’ job readiness was assessed in terms of work preparedness, application of acquired skills, employment support, and alignment of the academic track with the labor market. The overall aggregate weighted mean was 2.74, interpreted as “Moderately Ready,” indicating that while students gained foundational readiness, gaps remain in technical and employment-related aspects.

In the area of work preparedness, students obtained a mean of 2.63 (“Moderately Ready”), with indicators such as holistic preparation (WM = 2.81) and adherence to workplace standards (WM = 2.78) showing moderate levels, while computer literacy scored the lowest at 2.19 (“Quite Ready”). This suggests that digital competency remains a weakness that should be addressed through additional training. The application of acquired skills was also rated “Moderately Ready” (WM = 2.65), with the highest indicator being the ability to “work smart” (WM = 2.88), while operating equipment received lower ratings (WM = 2.69), pointing to limited hands-on exposure.

Employment support received a mean of 2.70, also within the “Moderately Ready” range, with the highest score for accessibility of job opportunities (WM = 2.91) and the lowest for advancing the employment process (WM = 2.56). This reflects that while students gain employable skills, institutional mechanisms for job matching and placement require improvement. Alignment of track and strand was rated 2.86, also “Moderately Ready,” with the highest indicator for acquiring suitable knowledge (WM = 3.00) and the lowest for applying aligned skills (WM = 2.75). This shows that while academic preparation aligns reasonably well

with job tasks, complete alignment between curriculum and workplace requirements has yet to be achieved.

Overall, these results imply that while students are moderately equipped for employment, continuous enhancement of digital literacy, technical training, and job placement support is necessary. Studies by Dela Cruz et al. (2020), Talavera (2023), and Piatos (2024) affirm similar findings, stressing that immersion programs improve employability but often leave gaps in specialized and digital skill readiness.

### Perception of respondents on skills development

Skills development, a core component of the work immersion experience, was assessed in five domains—work habits, work skills, social skills, personal skills, and technical skills—with an overall weighted mean of 2.87, interpreted as “Averagely Efficient.”

In terms of work habits, students rated themselves as “Averagely Efficient” (WM = 2.85), with performing tasks without much supervision scoring highest (WM = 2.97) and punctuality the lowest (WM = 2.69). This indicates moderate self-discipline and commitment but a need for reinforcement of punctuality and initiative. Work skills were similarly rated “Averagely Efficient” (WM = 2.88), with the highest score for handling detailed work (WM = 3.03) and the lowest for operating machinery (WM = 2.72), indicating adequate but uneven skill development depending on exposure.

Social skills were the strongest area (WM = 3.09, “Averagely Efficient”), with respect and courtesy receiving the only “Highly Efficient” rating (WM = 3.69), while other indicators such as teamwork and self-confidence were moderately rated. Personal skills were rated 2.83, with students recognizing the program’s role in helping them identify strengths (WM = 3.00) and connect theory to practice, though innovation and critical thinking scored lower (WM = 2.63). Technical skills had the lowest mean (WM = 2.72), with moderate to average efficiency, particularly in discovering new techniques (WM = 2.69) and operating software or tools (WM = 2.41).

These results suggest that the work immersion program contributes substantially to the development of social, personal, and practical skills but needs enhancement in technical training and equipment access. The findings are consistent with Lagrada and Bober (2024), Lasrado et al. (2022), and the Department of Education (2024), which emphasize that while immersion strengthens soft skills, gaps in technical proficiency persist due to resource constraints.

### Correlation between work immersion impact, job readiness, and skills development

Correlation analysis revealed significant relationships among the major variables of the study. A very strong negative correlation ( $r = -0.984$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) was found between the perceived impact of the work immersion program and students’ level of job readiness, indicating that as perceived program impact increases, students’ self-assessed job readiness tends to decrease. This result, though statistically significant, suggests that students who are more aware of program benefits may also be more critical of their preparedness, or that perceived program success does not always translate into personal confidence. Similarly, a weak negative

correlation ( $r = -0.327$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) was found between students' job readiness and their perception of skills developed through work immersion, meaning that higher self-reported skill gains were slightly associated with lower self-assessed job readiness. This could indicate that as students gain more realistic workplace exposure, they become more aware of the professional competencies they still need to master.

These findings imply that while the work immersion program effectively enhances competencies, ethics, and values, it may not yet fully translate into perceived job readiness. Educators and policymakers should therefore focus on bridging this perceptual gap by providing continuous career counseling, confidence-building programs, and longer immersion durations to ensure that practical skills lead to stronger self-efficacy and readiness for employment. Dela Cruz and Permejo (2020), Lasrado et al. (2022), and Tinio (2025) highlight similar complexities, emphasizing that perceived benefits of vocational programs often coexist with self-awareness of unpreparedness, underscoring the importance of holistic implementation.

### Findings and implications

Overall, the findings reveal that the respondents were predominantly male (62.50%), aged 18–19 (68.76%), all under the Home Economics strand, and assigned to private partner institutions for work immersion. Students perceived the program as highly impactful in developing competencies (WM = 3.62), work ethics (WM = 3.58), and relevant values (WM = 3.61). However, they rated themselves only moderately ready for employment (WM = 2.74), with the highest readiness in track alignment (WM = 2.86) and the lowest in work preparedness (WM = 2.63). For skills development, the program was rated as “Averagely Efficient” (WM = 2.87), with social skills (WM = 3.09) emerging as the most developed and technical skills (WM = 2.72) the least. The correlation analyses revealed significant but negative relationships between perceived program impact and job readiness ( $r = -0.984$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and between job readiness and perceived skill development ( $r = -0.327$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that greater recognition of program impact does not necessarily equate to higher self-assessed readiness.

These results underscore that while the work immersion program is effective in enhancing competencies, values, and ethics, continuous improvement is needed to strengthen technical training, industry alignment, and student confidence. Schools should pursue broader and more inclusive partnerships, improve digital literacy training, and integrate reflective practices to ensure that students not only acquire skills but also internalize the confidence and readiness to transition successfully into the workforce.

### CONCLUSION

The work immersion program significantly enhances students' competencies, work ethics, and values, contributing to their holistic development. However, students' self-assessed job readiness remains moderate, indicating gaps in translating program benefits into tangible employment preparedness. The negative correlations suggest that while students recognize the program's value, they may also become more aware of their limitations or the complexities of the job market. The study underscores the need for targeted interventions to bridge these gaps and improve the program's alignment with industry demands.

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