

Aligning Education with Employment: Analysis of Industry Needs in Eastern Visayas

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ABSTRACT

This study, conducted in the capital town of Northern Samar, Catarman, characterized the industry needs of the locality. Through a quantitative approach using descriptive design, data were gathered using a semi-structured questionnaire which was validated by experts in the field. A stratified sampling technique was used to identify 104 key decision-makers including managers, heads, and owners, across various sectors surveyed, revealing compelling insights. The findings revealed that reasons for hiring SHS and HEI graduates include qualifications and ease of training, fostering inclusivity and cost-effectiveness. Conversely, challenges arise from a preference for college graduates and adherence to company policies, reflecting nuanced motivations in recruitment. The study underscores a pronounced demand for work and social skill sets, prioritizing professionalism, productivity, and attitude. Technical skill requirements vary across industries, highlighting distinct needs. The identified challenges, particularly the need for more training and concerns about graduates' readiness, emphasized the complex nature of workforce integration. These findings prompt recommendations for tailored training programs, enhanced recruitment strategies, and collaborative initiatives to address gaps and align education with industry needs.

Keywords: senior high school, tertiary education, industry needs, graduate skills

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the K-12 education system in the Philippines marked a significant shift in the educational landscape, aiming to enhance the readiness of students for college, the workforce, and entrepreneurship. Despite the potential benefits of this educational reform, there are notable discrepancies between the competencies of Senior High School (SHS) graduates and the hiring preferences of employers in Eastern Visayas, particularly concerning the employability of SHS graduates (Malbas, et. al, 2023; Abragan, et. al, 2022). This study seeks to bridge the gap between educational outcomes and industry needs by providing a detailed analysis of the regional labor market in Eastern Visayas. Understanding the characteristics of industries in Eastern Visayas is critical, as the region's economic development is heavily influenced by specific sectors.

Recent studies highlight the uncertainty surrounding the employability of SHS graduates as reported, only 20% of leading companies are inclined to hire SHS graduates, often favoring candidates with at least two years of college education. This hiring trend raises questions about the efficacy of the K-12 curriculum in preparing students for immediate employment. By investigating the profiles of industries regarding their hiring practices for SHS and Higher Education Institution (HEI) graduates, the study will identify the gaps in skills and qualifications that hinder employment opportunities for these graduates (Malbas, et. al, 2023; Asis, 2020).

One of the primary objectives of this study is to ascertain the specific skills required by industries, categorized into work, social, and technical skill sets. This will provide insights into the competencies that

Senior High School (SHS) and Higher Education Institution (HEI) graduates must develop to meet industry expectations. Furthermore, understanding the reasons industries may hesitate to hire SHS graduates will facilitate the development of targeted training programs that can incorporate these essential skills into the educational curriculum.

Additionally, this study will explore the challenges that industries encounter in hiring SHS and HEI graduates. Identifying these challenges will inform policymakers and educational institutions about necessary reforms in the curriculum and training programs to better prepare graduates for the workforce. This study is pivotal in characterizing the industry needs in Eastern Visayas, addressing the gap between educational outcomes and labor market requirements. By investigating the profiles of industries, hiring practices, required skills, and the challenges faced, this research will contribute valuable insights that can inform the continuous improvement of the K-12 educational system and enhance the employability of SHS and HEI graduates in the region. The outcomes of this study could lead to more relevant training programs, improved collaboration between educational institutions and industries, and ultimately a more competent workforce ready to meet the economic demands of Eastern Visayas.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to characterize the Industry Needs in Region 8. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Describe the profile of the industry in terms of
 - a. ownership
 - b. industry type
 - c. labor size
 - d. number of senior high school graduates hired in the last 5 years
 - e. number of fresh HEI graduates hired in the last 5 years
 - f. starting salary of senior high school graduates hired
 - g. starting salary of fresh HEI graduates hired
2. Determine the reasons for hiring senior high school and fresh HEI graduates.
3. Identify the reasons for not hiring senior high school and fresh HEI graduates.
4. Determine the skills required by the industries in terms of:
 - a. Work skillset
 - b. Social skillset
 - c. Technical skillset
5. Discover the challenges and problems encountered by the industry sector in hiring SHS graduates and HEI graduates

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Today, it is widely recognized that interactions between firms, universities and research organizations are a *sine qua non* condition for successful innovation in the current era of the knowledge-based economy. Many recent empirical studies highlight that knowledge production involves an increasing number of actors who are more interconnected to each other.

Malbos, et. al, (2023) provided a comprehensive analysis of the Philippine educational system in the context of the K-12 program implemented in 2013, employing an integrative literature review methodology to assess its historical context, challenges, and outcomes. Key findings reveal a mixed impact of the K-12 program, highlighting its positive contributions to educational outcomes and student preparedness for higher education and employment, while also identifying significant challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher preparedness issues, socio-economic disparities, and barriers to inclusivity. The study emphasizes the urgent need for targeted interventions and policy adjustments to tackle these challenges, advocating for investments in resources and training, as well as strategies to promote equitable access to education. Overall, the research

underscores the necessity of refining the Philippine educational landscape to foster a more inclusive and globally competitive environment for future generations.

Scherngell and Barber (2009) identified collaboration patterns of cross-region intra-industry and intra-public-research Research & Development collaborations in Europe, and measured separation effects on the constitution of cross-region intra-industry and intra public-research R&D collaborations in Europe. In particular, the authors explored whether different kinds of geographical space – such as physical distance between regions or existence of country borders between regions – show different effects on these types of collaboration.

In the other hand, Hajilo et. al (2017) conducted study on the spatial analysis of the distribution of small businesses in the eastern parts of Gilan Province with an emphasis on tourism in mountainous regions. The study population consisted of all villages in the east part of Gilan Province, and the sample included all businesses officially supported by the Omid Entrepreneurship Fund. The research method was a descriptive analytic in which GIS software and the G statistic were used for the analysis of spatial correlation, clustering, hot and cold spots analysis and buffer zones. The results showed that the distribution of businesses in all activities was much higher in the plains and valleys as compared to the mountainous and hill areas.

Most studies of industry clusters in states and regions define clusters as localized concentrations of linked sectors and enterprises along with supporting non-business organizations and programs. The challenge for researchers and development practitioners undertaking such studies is to find a means of systematically identifying clusters given typical sub-state industry data and virtually no information on direct patterns of interaction between regional firms. Ideally, cluster studies should also acknowledge development opportunities afforded by clusters in neighboring states or border regions, further complicating the analysis. Feser et al, (2001) that a hybrid methodology that combines a spatial analysis of interindustry linkages with spatial statistical analysis of employment patterns can yield rich information about industry clusters in state and sub-state areas. The authors illustrated the approach in a study of Kentucky’s economy.

The industry cluster has become an important concept in economic development research and practice. In their ideal form, clusters are essentially the empirical manifestation of the mutually reinforcing influences of first-mover effects, conventional business agglomeration economies, localized technology spillovers, and geographical path dependence. Economic development strategies focused on clusters seek to leverage such forces to a state or region’s advantage. More than simply picking “winners,” cluster policies attempt to marshal diverse resources and programs behind groups of related industries that have demonstrated some evidence of local competitive success (Porter, 2000)

Conceptual Framework

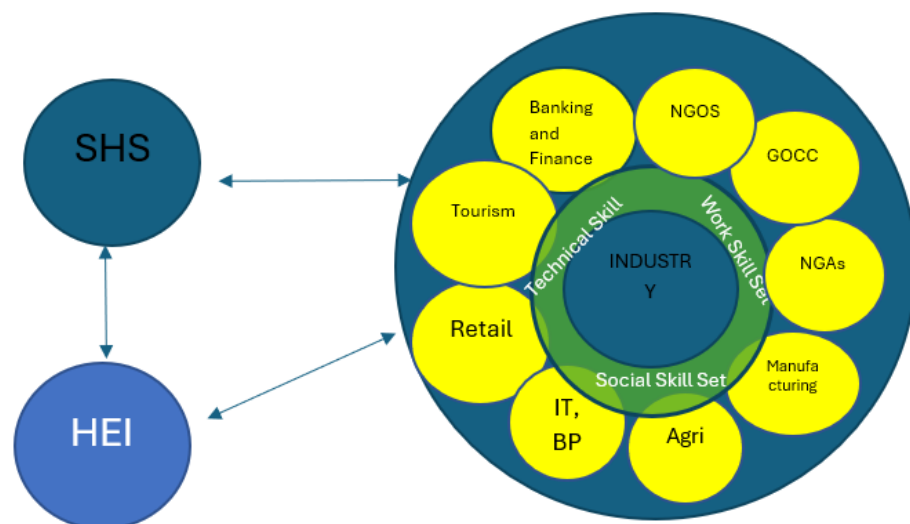


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative approach and descriptive research design as it attempted to identify the skills required from graduates of senior high school and fresh HEI graduates by the different industries. The study was conducted in the capital town of Northern Samar, Catarman, where most of the industries are located. The respondents of the study consisted of the key decision-makers in the hiring process of their respective organizations which include the heads of offices for the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) or National Government Agencies (NGAs), and Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs); managers for banking and finance industry; and the owners or managers of establishments in the Agriculture, Information Technology (IT) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO,) Manufacturing, Retail, and Tourism industry.

Primary data were gathered using a semi-structured survey questionnaire, wherein the measures of the skills were taken from various references. The instrument was then submitted for validation to field experts from another Higher Education Institution in the region, to ensure the validity of the instrument. The research instrument composed of 9 sets, one for each specific industry classification. For all the industries, the profile of the industry was asked, followed by the required work skillset, and social skillset. Meanwhile, the technical skill set preferred in hiring the SHS and HEI graduates, used specific measures for each type of industry. The study utilized stratified sampling technique wherein the total population were clustered according to the industry. The total population of the study consisted of 15 from banking and finance, 25 for tourism, 55 for retail, 15 for NGA's/LGUs; 2 for NGOs, and 4 for GOCCs A total of 104 offices/ enterprises/ organizations were included as respondents of the study, which were randomly selected for the retail, hospitality, and banking and finance industries; whereas, for the GOCCs, NGAs/LGUs, and NGO's, a complete enumeration was done due to the limited number of population. The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, and ranking through the use of JAMOVI statistical application.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Industries

Table 1 describes the profile of the industries. In terms of ownership, most of the organizations included in the study are individually owned (38.5%), followed by corporation (36.5%) and state-owned agencies (19.2%). In terms of industry type, most of the establishments belong to the retail industry (46.2%), followed by tourism industry (20.2%), and the National Government Agencies/ Local Government Units (14.4%). As to the labor size, most of the organizations are considered as micro in size, or with less than 10 employees (49%); followed by small enterprises/ organizations with 10-49 employees (41.3%).

The study also investigated the number of Senior High School graduates hired in the last 5 years and found that a great majority of the organizations/enterprises did not hire senior high school graduates in the last 5 years, while there are a small number of these organizations that hire 1-24 SHS graduates. In terms of hiring fresh HEI graduates, the result showed that majority of the organizations/ enterprises also did not hire them in the last 5 years, while a small number of these organizations have hired 1-11 fresh college graduates. The lack of hiring for the majority of businesses mirrors literature that discusses the disconnect between education and employment opportunities, specifically in developing economies (Mourshed, Farrell, & Barton, 2013). Conversely, the hiring of fresh Higher Education Institution (HEI) graduates shows slight fluctuations but remains consistently low. This could indicate a potential underutilization of higher education credentials or a mismatch between graduate skills and industry needs. According to the World Bank (2019), aligning educational outcomes with industry requirements is crucial for enhancing employability.

In terms of starting salary of SHS graduates hired, most of the organizations who hired them offered salary ranging from P 5,200-6,399 only. In the case of fresh HEI graduates hired, most of the organizations which hired gave starting salary in the range of P 13,570-15,500. The data on starting salaries for both SHS and

fresh HEI graduates presents a mixed picture. Starting salaries for SHS graduates show modest growth, particularly in higher brackets, which may illustrate an increasing recognition of the value of these graduates. Literature demonstrates that offering competitive salaries is vital for attracting talent (Baker, 2016). On the other hand, the starting salaries for HEI graduates demonstrate variability, with a notable rise in the 13,570-15,500 brackets by 2022. This increase could reflect a rising demand for skilled labor, as industries evolve and seek specialized competencies. Moreover, this observation resonates with the findings of the Graduate Employment Studies, which indicate that graduates in fields with higher demand tend to command better starting salaries (Smith et al., 2017).

Table 1. Profile of Industries

Ownership	Frequency	Percentage				
Sole proprietorship	40	38.5%				
Partnership	4	3.8%				
Corporation	38	36.5%				
Non-Stock Corporation	2	1.9%				
State-Owned	20	19.2%				
Industry Type	Frequency	Percentage				
Banking and Finance	14	13.5%				
Tourism (Hospitality and Leisure)	21	20.2%				
Retail	48	46.2%				
National Government Agency/ Local Government Unit	15	14.4%				
Government-Owned and Controlled Corporation	4	3.8%				
Non-Government Organization	2	1.9%				
Labor Size	Frequency	Percentage				
Micro Enterprise (fewer than 10 employees)	51	49%				
Small Enterprise (10 to 49 employees)	43	41.3%				
Medium Enterprise (50 to 249 employees)	6	5.8%				
Large Enterprise (250 or more employees)	4	3.8%				
No. of SHS Graduates Hired	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
None	95	98	97	94	90	
1-24	8	5	6	8	13	
25-48	-	-	-	1	-	
49-72	-	1	1	-	-	
73-96	-	-	-	1	-	
97-121	1	-	-	-	1	
No. of Fresh HEI Graduates Hired	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
None	98	94	99	98	91	
1-11	4	3	4	4	11	
12-22	1	7	1	-	-	
23-33	1	-	-	-	-	
34-44	-	-	-	1	1	
45-55	-	-	-	1	1	
Starting Salary of SHS Graduate Hired	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
4,000-5,199	-	-	-	2	-	
5,200-6,399	5	4	2	2	2	

6,400-7,599	1	-	3	3	1
7,600-8,799	2	1	1	-	2
8,800-10,000	1	1	1	3	9
Starting Salary of Fresh HEI Graduates Hired	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
5,850-7,779	2	2	1	1	2
7,780-9,709	-	1		1	3
9,710,11,639	1	-		1	2
11,640-13,569	3	3	2	1	1
13,570-15,500	-	4	2	2	6

Reasons for Hiring SHS/Fresh HEI Graduates

Table 2 presents the reasons of the organizations/ enterprises who hiring SHS/ HEI fresh graduates. The results show that SHS and fresh HEI graduates are hired as they are qualified based on the requirements of the job and because they are easy to train. Other reasons presented were “minimum skills required/eligible for menial jobs”, lesser costs or minimal pay, and because they wanted to give opportunities to students who are working. The top two reasons for hiring SHS and fresh HEI graduates, which are “qualified based on the requirements of the job” and “easy to train”, highlight the importance of aligning educational outcomes with employer expectations. This suggests that while many employers recognize the potential of these graduates, there may still be concerns regarding competency and readiness for specific roles. The literature supports this perspective, indicating that employers often hire candidates who not only possess the necessary qualifications but also demonstrate adaptability and a willingness to learn (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). On the other hand, “minimum skills required/eligible for menial jobs” being the third reason indicates a somewhat concerning trend where these graduates are primarily viewed as suitable for low-skill positions. Research suggests that graduates often find themselves in roles that do not match their qualifications, leading to underemployment (Davis & Dempsey, 2016). This mismatch can result in both job dissatisfaction and a potential waste of human capital, emphasizing the need for clearer pathways from education to meaningful employment.

Table 2. Reasons for Hiring SHS/Fresh HEI Graduates

Reasons	Responses	Rank
Qualified based on the requirements of the job	4	1.5
Easy to train	4	1.5
Minimum skills required/ Eligible for menial jobs	2	3
Lesser costs/ minimal pay	2	4.5
Give opportunities to support students who are working	1	4.5

Note: Multiple Responses

Reasons for Not Hiring SHS/Fresh HEI Graduates

Table 3 presents the reasons for not hiring SHS and fresh HEI graduates. Among the top reasons cited were “college graduates as a requirement for hiring” and “company policy”. In addition, unavailability of SHS graduate applicants, no new hiring of the company, preference on graduates with experience and Civil Service standards were also the reasons brought up for not hiring. The top cited reasons underscore a significant hurdle for SHS and fresh HEI graduates. Many organizations maintain a preference for college graduates as a baseline qualification, reflecting a deep-seated belief in the value of a bachelor's degree as a marker of capability (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). This reliance on educational credentials can inadvertently marginalize SHS graduates, despite their potential to contribute effectively to entry-level roles.

Moreover, the requirement for college degrees is often compounded by specific company policies that may not consider the evolving landscape of workforce readiness and the practical skills that SHS graduates may offer (Bolton et al., 2018). These policies can create a rigid hiring framework that overlooks valuable talent in favor of candidates who meet traditional educational standards.

Table 3. Reasons for Not Hiring SHS/Fresh HEI Graduates

Reasons	Responses	Rank
College graduate is required	26	1.5
Company policy	26	1.5
All applicants are college graduates, no SHS graduate applicants	25	3
No new hiring, all hired staff were before implementation of Kto12	23	5
Industry needs graduates preferably with experience	23	5
CSC/ QS standards	23	5
No authority to hire, hiring is in Regional/ Main Office	12	7.5
Applicants with experience are easier to train and capable of doing tasks	12	7.5
SHS graduates lack knowledge and skills to carry out complicated tasks	11	10
High supply of experienced and qualified pool of applicants	11	10
Agency needs experienced technical people	11	10

Note: Multiple Responses

Skill Sets Required by Industries

Table 4 presents a comprehensive overview of the essential work skill sets required by various industries among their employees. The data underscores a universal demand for these skills across industries, with an overall mean rating of 3.69. Notably, professionalism, productivity, and attitude emerge as the most coveted work skills, reflecting their significance in the workplace. Similarly, Table 4.b delves into the social skill sets expected from employees, revealing a high overall requirement (mean=3.72). Among these skills, the data highlights that respect and courtesy in interactions with peers and superiors are particularly emphasized.

In terms of the technical skill set, the findings vary by industry. While all industries, except Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCS), consider technical skills highly required (mean=3.33), the requirement for each industry varies. For banking and financial institutions, proficiency in basic accounting concepts and knowledge of computer software applications are paramount. In the tourism sector, expertise in health, safety, and security procedures takes precedence. In the retail industry, the ability to arrange product displays effectively is identified as the top priority. Meanwhile, National Government Agencies/Local Government Units prioritize knowledge of software applications, technology use for administrative support, and adherence to office policies. Furthermore, Government Owned and Controlled Corporations underscore the importance of understanding proper data collection, documentation, and filing. Non-Government Organizations emphasize good written and verbal communication skills, along with expertise in data recording, sorting, classifying, and filing. The ability to organize and supervise workplace filing systems is also highlighted.

These results collectively capture the diverse skill requirements across industries, shedding light on the specific competencies sought by employers in different sectors. The high requirement for essential work skill sets indicates a strong consensus on the significance of certain foundational skills across industries, meanwhile, similarly, the high requirement for social skills underlines the growing recognition of interpersonal competencies in the workplace. As workplaces become increasingly collaborative, the ability to effectively engage with peers and superiors is essential for maintaining a harmonious work environment (Robinson & Judge, 2013). These findings suggest critical implications for workforce development and education strategies. With a universal demand for professionalism and social skills, educational institutions

and training programs should prioritize these competencies within their curricula. Moreover, the specific technical skill needs across industries indicate a necessity for targeted training programs. Industry partnerships could play a crucial role in curriculum development, ensuring that educational offerings remain aligned with the evolving demands of the labor market (Berglund, 2017).

Table 4.a Work Skill Set Required by the Industries

Work Skills Set	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Teamwork	3.80	.427	Highly Required
Communication	3.42	.692	Highly Required
Professionalism	3.82	.388	Highly Required
Productivity	3.82	.388	Highly Required
Reliability	3.75	.457	Highly Required
Resilience	3.73	.467	Highly Required
Proactivity	3.44	.651	Highly Required
Decision-making	3.60	.566	Highly Required
Judgment	3.71	.476	Highly Required
Attitude	3.82	.413	Highly Required
Mean Score	3.69		Highly Required

Table 4.b Social Skill Set Required by the Industries

Social Skills Set	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Tack in dealing with other people	3.72	.472	Highly Required
Respect and courtesy in dealing with peers and superiors	3.84	.372	Highly Required
Willingly help others in the performance of their assigned task	3.74	.441	Highly Required
Capable of learning from and listening to co-workers	3.68	.389	Highly Required
Shows poise, self-confidence, and good grooming	3.60	.616	Highly Required
Mean Score	3.72		Highly Required

Table 4.c Technical Skill Set Required by the Banking and Finance Industry

Technical Skills Set	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1) Understands fundamental mathematical operations in using decimals, fractions, percent, and ratio and proportion.	3.43	.646	Highly Required
2) Understand basic concepts of mathematics used in business (e.g., buying and selling, computing gross and net earnings, and computing overtime).	3.50	.650	Highly Required
3) Understands the basic accounting concepts and principles in business transactions (e.g., bill payments, money transfer, cash deposits, and withdrawals).	3.86	.363	Highly Required
4) Good written and verbal communication skills that are necessary in situations like drafting reports for clients, responding to telephone or electronic inquiries, or speaking with people at a meeting.	3.64	.497	Highly Required
5) Knowledgeable in the use of computer software applications (e.g., MS Excel, SPSS) and other relevant technologies for computation and data presentation.	3.86	.646	Highly Required
6) Demonstrates the ability to operate other machines, equipment, or materials needed for the job.	3.50	.650	Highly Required

7) Understands proper business data collection and filing, presentation, analysis, and interpretation.	3.43	.646	Highly Required
8) Familiar with the basic concepts, principles, and processes related to a business organization.	3.36	.745	Required
9) Familiar with management functions (e.g., planning, organizing, leading, and controlling).	3.29	.825	Required
10) Understands basic financial accounting systems or funds for individuals, establishments and public or private institutions.	3.29	.726	Required
Mean Score	3.52		Highly Required

n=14

Table 4.d Technical Skill Set Required by the Tourism Industry

Technical Skills Set	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1) Familiar with operating relevant equipment/machines needed for the job (e.g., search information on the internet, reply to emails, operate the cash register, and answer telephone/ fax).	3.38	.590	Required
2) Knowledge of basic documentation in line with enterprise procedures (e.g., taking order slips, noting down inventory, recording complaints/ suggestions, and operating a computerized reservation system). Also able to complete routine records and reports accurately within designated timelines.	3.43	.598	Highly Required
3) Properly handle and manage guests in line with enterprise procedures (e.g., handling inebriated guests and demonstrating sensitivity to cultural and social differences.)	3.62	.590	Highly Required
4) Able to identify guests' needs accurately. Assess their needs for urgency and identify priority for service delivery. Also, able to provide the correct information to guests.	3.67	.483	Highly Required
5) Able to quickly respond and provide solutions whenever a problem arises, especially when guests have complaints or concerns.	3.62	.590	Highly Required
6) Properly trained in the service they are providing (e.g., bartending, housekeeping, and front office services).	3.70	.571	Highly Required
7) Proper preparation, operation, and maintenance of the service area (e.g., bar, hotel room, and restaurant).	3.67	.483	Highly Required
8) Proper preparation and processing of ingredients/ machine/ tools needed for service (e.g., alcoholic drinks, food ingredients, cleaning tools).	3.62	.498	Highly Required
9) Able to properly manage materials and facility resources.	3.76	.436	Highly Required
10) Implement and follow workplace hygiene procedures in line with enterprise and legal requirements. Also knowledgeable in proper health, safety, and security procedures.	3.86	.359	Highly Required
Mean Score	3.63		Highly Required

n=21

Table 4.e Technical Skill Set Required by the Retail Industry

Technical Skills Set	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Able to manage people effectively and efficiently (i.e. handling several customers while answering their questions and attending to their other needs) .	3.51	.607	Highly Required
2. Has good communication skills. They are able to attract customers while effectively demonstrating product features, usage, and benefits.	3.58	.605	Highly Required
3. Able to arrange product displays in an effective and efficient manner.	3.64	.538	Highly Required
4. Able to effectively sell the products offered to the customers and reach sales targets.	3.63	.576	Highly Required
5. Able to manually calculate prices, discounts, and transactions.	3.55	.605	Highly Required
6. Able to handle transaction machines like cash registers, credit card processors, or point of sale (POS) machines.	3.53	.669	Highly Required
7. Able to operate other machines, equipment, or materials needed for the job.	3.41	.691	Highly Required
8. Has knowledge of proper bookkeeping skills and knows how to keep other business records (inventory).	3.31	.738	Required
9. Able to quickly respond and provide solutions whenever a problem arises, especially when customers have complaints or concerns	3.50	.668	Highly Required
10. Fully understand the company they work for, the products they sell, and the types of customers who purchase their product.	3.55	.652	Highly Required
Mean Score	3.52		Highly Required

n=48

Table 4.f Technical Skill Set Required by the National Government Agencies/Local Government Units

Technical Skills Set	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1) Good written and verbal communication skills that are necessary in situations like drafting reports, responding to telephone and electronic inquiries, or speaking with people at a meeting.	3.53	.743	Highly Required
2) Understands proper data/information recording, preparing, sorting, classifying and filing.	3.60	.828	Highly Required
3) Able to organize and supervise workplace filing systems.	3.60	.632	Highly Required
4) Knowledgeable in the use of computer software applications and other relevant technologies to provide administrative support. (e.g., MS PowerPoint, MS Excel, and MS Word).	3.73	.799	Highly Required
5) Has the ability to operate other machines, equipment, or materials needed for the job.	3.33	.617	Required
6) Able to properly respond to inquiries and provide correct advice, information, and assistance all in accordance with office policies.	3.73	.594	Highly Required
7) Able to check, format, and transcribe correspondence, minutes, and reports from dictation, electronic documents, or written drafts to conform to office standards.	3.33	.900	Required
8) Has experience or is familiar with the process in organizing events for the community.	3.07	.799	Required

9) Familiar with the basic concepts, principles, and processes related to the NGA/NGO.	3.27	.961	Required
10) Familiar with workplace management functions (e.g., planning, organizing, leading, and controlling).	3.27	.961	Required
Mean Score	3.45		Highly Required

n=15

Table 4.g Technical Skill Set Required by the Government Owned and Controlled Corporations

Technical Skills Set	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1) Good written and verbal communication skills that are necessary in situations like drafting reports, responding to telephone and electronic inquiries, or speaking with people at a meeting.	3.25	.500	Required
2) Understands proper data collection, documentation, and filing.	3.75	.500	Highly Required
3) Understands proper data presentation, analysis, and interpretation (e.g., compiling statistics and making auditing reports).	3.50	.577	Highly Required
4) Knowledgeable in the use of computer software applications and other relevant technologies for computation and data presentation (e.g., MS PowerPoint and MS Excel).	3.50	.577	Highly Required
5) Has the ability to operate other machines, equipment, or materials needed for the job.	3.25	.957	Required
6) Able to properly respond to inquiries and provide correct advice, information, and assistance all in accordance with workplace policies.	3.50	.577	Highly Required
7) Familiar with the basic concepts, principles, and processes related to the GOCC.	3.25	.500	Required
8) Able to interpret technical designs/plans related to the GOCC.	3.00	.816	Required
9) Able to calculate, prepare, and issue bills, invoices, account statements, and other financial statements according to established procedures.	2.75	.500	Moderately Required
10) Familiar with management functions (e.g., planning, organizing, leading, and controlling).	3.50	.577	Highly Required
Mean Score	3.33		Required

n=4

Table 4.h Technical Skill Set Required by the Non-Government Organization

Technical Skills Set	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1) Good written and verbal communication skills that are necessary in situations like drafting reports, responding to telephone and electronic inquiries, or speaking with people at a meeting.	4.0	.000	Highly Required
2) Understands proper data/information recording, preparing, sorting, classifying and filing.	4.0	.000	Highly Required
3) Able to organize and supervise workplace filing systems.	4.0	.000	Highly Required
4) Knowledgeable in the use of computer software applications and other relevant technologies to provide administrative support. (e.g., MS PowerPoint, MS Excel, and MS Word).	3.5	.707	Highly Required
5) Has the ability to operate other machines, equipment, or materials needed for the job.	3.5	.707	Highly Required

6) Able to properly respond to inquiries and provide correct advice, information, and assistance all in accordance with office policies.	3.5	.707	Highly Required
7) Able to check, format, and transcribe correspondence, minutes, and reports from dictation, electronic documents, or written drafts to conform to office standards.	3.5	.707	Highly Required
8) Has experience or is familiar with the process in organizing events for the community.	3.5	.707	Highly Required
9) Familiar with the basic concepts, principles, and processes related to the NGA/NGO.	3.5	.707	Highly Required
10) Familiar with workplace management functions (e.g., planning, organizing, leading, and controlling).	3.5	.707	Highly Required
Mean Score	3.65		Highly Required

n=2

Challenges and Problems Encountered

Table 5 presents the challenges and problems encountered in hiring Senior High School and fresh HEI graduates by the industries. The result shows that the need for more training poses as the biggest challenge and problem of the industries. Next to this is the unavailability of these graduates, their inadequate communication and customer service skills, and their lack of maturity. Other problems encountered were lack of experience, lack of focus and the tendency to find other jobs. Moreover, some organizations have also identified inability to working under pressure, being selective on the type of work, and having no confidence as other problems and challenges encountered.

The most pressing issue identified is the “need for more training”, this finding aligns with previous literature that emphasizes the necessity for educational institutions to align their curricula with industry demands (Bennett et al., 2008). Employers increasingly report that graduates lack the practical skills necessary for immediate employment, necessitating training and development programs World Economic Forum (2020), continuous learning and upskilling are essential to address the skills gap in the workforce. Following this, the emphasis on communication and customer service skills reflects the growing importance of interpersonal abilities in a customer-centric economy. Poor communication skills can hinder employee performance, as effective interaction is vital in most job roles, especially in service-oriented sectors (Bennett, 2006). Furthermore, the noted lack of maturity suggests that many fresh graduates may not yet possess the emotional intelligence and professional demeanor expected in the workplace.

Table 5. Challenges and Problems Encountered in Hiring SHS and Fresh HEI Graduates

Challenges and Problems	Responses	Rank
Needs more training	5	1
Unavailability	4	3
Inadequate communication and customer service skills	4	3
Lack of maturity	4	3
Lack of experience	3	6
Lack of focus	3	6
Tendency to find other jobs	3	6
Cannot work under pressure	2	9
Selective on the type of work	2	9
No confidence	2	9
Lack of advanced knowledge	1	11

Note: Multiple Responses

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. There is a predominant ownership structure of individually owned organizations, with a notable presence of corporations and state-owned agencies. Most establishments fall within the retail industry, followed by tourism and government sectors. The labor size is predominantly micro, with less than 10 employees, and small enterprises with 10-49 employees. A substantial portion of organizations did not recruit Senior High School graduates or fresh Higher Education Institution (HEI) graduates in the last 5 years. Those who did hire typically employed a limited number of graduates. Starting salaries for Senior High School graduates ranged from P 5,200-6,399, while fresh HEI graduates received starting salaries in the range of P 13,570-15,500.
2. Organizations and enterprises hire Senior High School (SHS) and Higher Education Institution (HEI) fresh graduates primarily due to their qualification for the job and ease of training. Other reasons include meeting minimum skill requirements for certain positions, cost-effectiveness, and providing opportunities to working students.
3. Commonly cited reasons for not hiring include a preference for college graduates as a hiring requirement and adherence to company policies. These insights offer valuable perspectives on the motivations and challenges organizations face in their recruitment practices.
4. There is high demand for both work and social skill sets across various industries. Notably, professionalism, productivity, and attitude are considered top priorities in the work skill set, while respect and courtesy in interpersonal interactions stand out in the social skill set. Examining technical skill requirements, all industries except Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCS) highly prioritize technical skills, with specific nuances for each sector. These findings underscore the diverse technical skill needs across industries, providing valuable insights for workforce development.
5. The most significant hurdle is the need for more training, underscoring a gap between the skills acquired during education and those required in the workplace. Additionally, the unavailability of graduates, along with concerns about inadequate communication, customer service skills, and perceived immaturity, pose substantial challenges. The list of problems also includes issues such as lack of experience, focus, and a propensity for graduates to seek alternative employment. These findings collectively emphasize the complexity and multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by industries in the recruitment and integration of Senior High School and fresh HEI graduates into their workforce.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. For the industries, flexible hiring policies is recommended. Organizations should review and, if necessary, revise hiring policies that overly emphasize college graduates. Furthermore, enhanced recruitment strategies are recommended, with emphasis on actively seeking qualified Senior High School and HEI graduates.
2. Foster collaboration between industries and educational institutions to ensure that curricula align with the technical skill needs identified by different sectors. This collaboration can enhance the relevance and applicability of education to industry requirements.
3. There is a need to develop training programs that are industry-specific to address the identified gap in required skills, especially for Senior High School and fresh Higher Education Institution graduates.
4. Promotion of Soft Skills Development is recommended in both the academe and the industry. There is a need to highlight the importance of professionalism, productivity, attitude, respect, and courtesy, aligning these skills with industry expectations.

5. It is recommended that mentorship and internship programs in the academe be improved to address challenges related to lack of experience and perceived immaturity. This can provide graduates with valuable practical exposure and enhance their readiness for the workforce.
6. By implementing these recommendations, organizations and educational institutions can work collaboratively to bridge the gap between the academic preparation of graduates and the evolving needs of the workforce, fostering a more effective and harmonious transition into the professional sphere.

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