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Senior high school and the labor market: Perspectives of grade 12 students and human resource officers

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DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES NO. 2018-49

Senior High School and the Labor Market: Perspectives of Grade 12 Students and Human Resource Officers

*Aniceto C. Orbeta Jr., Marites B. Lagarto, Ma. Kristina P. Ortiz,
Danica Aisa P. Ortiz, and Maropsil V. Potestad*



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Senior High School and the Labor Market: Perspectives
of Grade 12 Students and Human Resource Officers

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Abstract

The enactment of RA 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 added two years to basic education. One of the rationales offered by proponents of the law is that Senior High School (SHS) graduates can work or engage in entrepreneurial activities if they choose to do so. This study assesses the likelihood of achieving the employment and entrepreneurship objectives of the program by examining the experience of grade 12 graduating students and the views of firms about the labor market prospects of the SHS graduates. It does this by (i) looking into the SHS curriculum and the competencies developed, (ii) identifying the types of jobs that fit the Grade 12 graduates, (iii) gathering the private sector perspective on the jobs available and appropriate for the Grade 12 graduates, and (iv) providing policy recommendations for the improvement of the implementation of the SHS program. The study revealed the despite identifying employment and entrepreneurship as a rationale for the program, three quarters of the grade 12 students plan to proceed to higher education. This proportion is true even for those in the TVL track. Among the highlights of the FGD with students is the revelation that they are not very confident that they will get a job after graduating from SHS. Even for those who passed National Certifications assessments, they still believe the firms will prefer to hire college graduates over them. From the firm side, most of them lack in-depth knowledge of the SHS program. They expressed the need to be exposed to the SHS graduates before they can be confident in hiring them. While it may be too early to be gauging the performance of the SHS program particularly the performance of its graduates in the labor market, the study has uncovered areas for improving the implementation of the program to boost the chances of achieving the employment and entrepreneurship objectives.

Keywords: Senior High School, K to 12, Basic Education, Labor Market

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Profile of Senior High School Students and Schools	2
3. Review of Related Literature	7
3.1. Willingness of companies to hire SHS graduates	8
3.2. Hiring of SHS graduates	9
3.3. Relevant policies and programs	10
4. Research Design and Methodology	13
4.1. Research design and data collection method	13
4.2. Study sites	13
4.3. Data processing, consolidation and analysis	15
5. Description of the SHS Curriculum	15
6. Highlights of FGDs with Grade 12 Students	16
6.1. Profile of Grade 12 student respondents	16
6.2. Enrolment to SHS	17
6.3. Experience in Senior High School	18
6.4. Employment prospects	20
6.5. Plans for Higher Education	23
7. Highlights of the KIs with the Firms	24
7.1. Profile of Participating Firms	24
7.2. Understanding of the SHS program	26
7.3. Willingness to hire SHS graduates	27
7.4. Type of jobs available to SHS graduates, qualifications and salary	29
7.5. Adjustments made/to be made in hiring policies	35
7.6. SHS graduates who applied and were hired	39
7.7. General comments on work-readiness of SHS graduates	42
8. Summary and Recommendations	43
8.1. Summary	43
8.2. Recommendations	46
9. References	50
10. APPENDICES	52

List of Tables

Table 1. Number of schools and enrollment in Grade 11 & Grade 12, SY 2017-2018.....	2
Table 2. Strand offerings, SY 2017-2018	3
Table 3. Strands offered by SHS, SY 2017-2018	4
Table 4. Graduation rates by track, SY 2017-2018	7
Table 5. Qualifications required for jobs available for high school graduates	9
Table 6. Examples of first level positions in the civil service and corresponding salary grade (SG) level according to qualifications	11
Table 7. Characteristics of schools selected for FGDs with G12 students by region	14
Table 8. Basic Education Curriculum	15
Table 9. Distribution of Respondents by Age and Sex	16
Table 10. Plan after graduation by track	17
Table 11. Lists of prospective jobs, by track.....	21
Table 12. Ranges of prospective salaries of SHS graduates, by specialization/type of work.....	21
Table 13. Type of firms who participated in the KII.....	25
Table 14. Type of jobs (based on occupational groups) available to SHS graduates by sector	29
Table 15. Number of SHS graduates who applied and were hired by firms.....	40

List of Figures

Figure 1. Distribution of enrollment, by track, SY 2017-18.....	4
Figure 2. Distribution of enrollment, by strand under the Academic track, SY 2017-18.....	5
Figure 3. Grade 12 enrollment, by region and by sex, SY 2017-2018	5
Figure 4. Distribution of enrollment in G12, by track and by sex, SY 2017-2018	6
Figure 5. Distribution of enrollment in G12, by Academic strand and by sex, SY 2017-2018. 6	

Acronyms and Abbreviations

SHS	-	Senior High School
COC	-	Certificates of Competency
NC	-	National Certificate
TESDA	-	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
DOLE	-	Department of Labor and Employment
CHED	-	Commission on Higher Education
PRC	-	Professional Regulations Committee
TVL	-	Technical-Vocational-Livelihood

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1. Introduction

When the RA 10533 or the Enhance Basic Education Act of 2013 was enacted into law, it faced considerable opposition from different sectors including a legal challenge to its constitutionality at the Supreme Court¹. One of the rationales offered by proponents of the reform is that Senior High School (SHS) graduates can work or engage in entrepreneurial activities if they choose to do so. This study assesses the likelihood of achieving this objective of the program by examining the experience of Grade 12 graduating students and the views of firms about the labor market prospects of the SHS graduates.

Reforming the basic education system has always been in the agenda of policy makers. Several fundamental issues are motivating the drive for reform. One, the ten-year basic education program is considered congested forcing students to absorb too many subject areas in a relatively short period of time leaving the students underprepared for higher education and employment. Two, the quality of basic education is also under question with national achievement test scores not improving fast enough and proportion of students demonstrating mastery of key learning areas remaining low. RA 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 was designed to address the many issues in basic education. The law extends basic education by making kindergarten compulsory and adding two years at the secondary level. Thus, there are now a total of 13 years in basic education – kindergarten, six years of elementary education, four years of junior high school and two years of senior high school. This is designed to provide enough time for mastery of concepts and skills, develop lifelong learners, and prepare graduates for tertiary education, middle-level skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, with the added two years in high school, students have already reached the employable age to qualify for employment in the formal sector by the time that they finish senior high school.

The additional two years for upper secondary education (i.e., SHS) allows the student to choose a specialization based on aptitude, interests, and school capacity. The student's choice of track will define the specialization subject he/she will take in Grades 11 and 12. The student may choose from academic, sports, arts and design, and technical vocational livelihood tracks. K to 12 is also geared towards strengthening TVET integration in SHS. After finishing Grade 10, a student can obtain Certificates of Competency (COC) or a National Certificate Level I (NC I).²

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¹ The Supreme Court ruled the law as constitutional on October 1, 2018.

<http://sc.judiciary.gov.ph/pdf/web/viewer.html?file=/jurisprudence/2018/october2018/216930.pdf>

² TESDA issues a COC to those who satisfactorily demonstrate competence on a particular or a cluster of units of competency. The COC leads to certification beginning with National Certificate Level 1 which indicates the performance of a routine and predictable task, requiring little judgement and supervision.

After finishing a Technical-Vocational-Livelihood track in Grade 12, a student may obtain a National Certificate Level II (NC II)³, provided he/she passes the competency-based assessment of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). This will allow graduates to have middle-level skills thus providing them better opportunities to be gainfully employed. In fact, the SHS Manual of Operations mentions as among the indicators of success an 80 percent hiring or business-launching rate within three months of graduation for learners under the TVL track.

To achieve its basic objective, this study (i) looks into the SHS curriculum and the competencies developed, (ii) identifies the types of jobs that fit the Grade 12 graduates, (iii) gathers private sector perspective on the jobs available and appropriate for the Grade 12 graduates, and (iv) provides policy recommendations for the improvement of the implementation of the SHS program.

Because of limitations of time and resources the study team are only able to do focus group discussions (FGDs) with grade 12 students in 18 schools in the NCR, Region III and Region IV-A. The key informant interviews (KIIs) with Human Resource Managers/Officers in 26 firms in NCR, Calabarzon and Cebu provided the firm perspectives. The FGDs and KIIs only captures the experience of the grade 12 students and perspectives of firms about SHS graduates. These are the main limitations of the study. It remains to be seen in the next few years how the SHS graduates perform in the labor market.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a background on the SHS program and illustrates the general profile of Grade 12 students in the country for the school year 2017-2018; Section 3 presents a review of related literature; Section 4 describes the study's research design and methodology; Sections 5 and 6 discuss the SHS experiences and challenges from the perspectives of the Grade 12 students and the firms, respectively; finally, Section 7 provides concluding comments and policy recommendations.

2. Profile of Senior High School Students and Schools

To provide a comprehensive picture of the senior high school market, a profile of the first batch of senior high school students and schools offering SHS in the country for the school year 2017-2018 is given in this section. This is done by providing the distribution of SHS students into the different tracks and strands as well as type of providers. This will provide a broad background to results of the FGDs with students and the KIIs of firms.

Table 1. Number of schools and enrollment in Grade 11 & Grade 12, SY 2017-2018

TYPE	Schools		Enrollment					
			G11		G12		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
PUBLIC	6,404	58	748,524	51	646,618	52	1,395,142	51
Private	4,451	40	684,653	46	564,351	45	1,249,004	46
SUC/LUC	232	2	47,926	3	41,388	3	89,314	3
Total	11,087	100	1,481,103	100	1,252,357	100	2,733,460	100

Source of basic data: Department of Education.

³ NC II indicates performance of a prescribed range of functions.

Looking at the data for SY 2017-2018, the Philippines has a total of 11,087 senior high schools of which 58 percent are public, 40 percent are private, and 2 percent are in SUC/LUCs (Table 1). A total of 2.7 million students are enrolled in senior high school of which 1.5 million are Grade 11 students, and 1.2 million are Grade 12 students. Particularly for the Grade 12 population, 52 percent are enrolled in public schools, 45 percent in private schools, and 3 percent are in SUCs/LUCs.

These distributions of enrollment per school classification highlight the important roles played by both the DepEd and the private schools in attaining the objectives of the senior high school program.

In terms of offerings, the senior high school program has four tracks: Academic, Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL), Arts and Design (ARTS), and Sports. Among these four tracks, large concentrations are in the Academic and the TVL tracks (see Figure 4).

The Academic track consists of five strands: (i) Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM); (ii) Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMMS); (iii) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); (iv) General Academic (GAS); and (v) Pre-Baccalaureate Maritime. The TVL track also consists of five strands: (i) Home Economics (HE); (ii) Information and Communications Technology (ICT); (iii) Industrial Arts; (iv) Agri-Fishery; and (v) TVL Maritime.

Table 2 shows that only a total of 34 schools, which is equivalent to 0.3 percent of all senior high schools, offer 7 out of 8 strands⁴, while no school offers all 8 strands as of SY 2017-2018. For both public and private schools, a high percentage of each offer only one strand at 43.9 percent and 31.5 percent, respectively. These are somehow indicative of the level of readiness of the schools across the country in terms of implementing the SHS program, further implying that only a small percentage of schools are “ready” to provide the students with *real* options in terms of the sets of skills that should prepare them for employment after graduation. This is validated through the results of focus group discussions presented in Section 3.

Table 2. Strand offerings, SY 2017-2018

Number of Strands	PUBLIC		Private		SUC/LUC		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	2,813	43.9	1,400	31.5	48	20.7	4,261	38.4
2	2,198	34.3	948	21.3	60	25.9	3,206	28.9
3	639	10.0	932	20.9	53	22.8	1,624	14.6
4	468	7.3	710	16.0	42	18.1	1,220	11.0
5	227	3.5	395	8.9	23	9.9	645	5.8
6	43	0.7	48	1.1	6	2.6	97	0.9
7	16	0.2	18	0.4	0	0.0	34	0.3
Total	6,404	100.0	4,451	100.0	232	100.0	11,087	100.0

Source of basic data: Department of Education.

⁴ Includes the five Academic strands, TVL, Arts, and Sports tracks. All five strands under the TVL track are grouped as one—i.e., TVL.

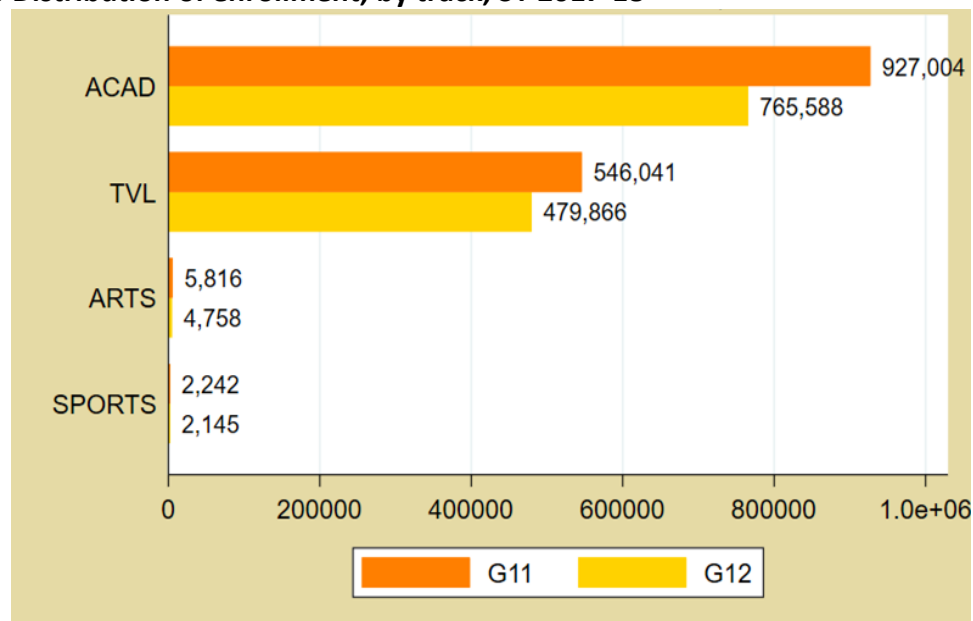
Table 3. Strands offered by SHS, SY 2017-2018

Strand	PUBLIC		Private		SUC/LUC		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
GAS	4,305	34.4	2,600	23.0	66	10.2	6,971	28.5
TVL*	4,503	36.0	2,246	19.8	162	25.1	6,911	28.2
ABM	1,241	9.9	2,627	23.2	121	18.7	3,989	16.3
HUMSS	1,317	10.5	1,857	16.4	132	20.4	3,306	13.5
STEM	974	7.8	1,812	16.0	150	23.2	2,936	12.0
ARTS	93	0.7	106	0.9	5	0.8	204	0.8
SPORTS	67	0.5	38	0.3	8	1.2	113	0.5
MARITIME	3	0.0	35	0.3	2	0.3	40	0.2

Source of basic data: Department of Education. [*] see footnote 5.

Among all these eight strands, GAS (28.5%) and TVL⁵ (28.2%) are the most commonly offered followed by ABM (16.3%), HUMSS (13.5%), STEM (12%), and only less than one percent each for ARTS and Design, SPORTS, and MARITIME is offered (Table 3). For public SHS, most offered are TVL and GAS; for private are ABM and GAS; and for SUC/LUC are TVL, STEM, HUMSS, and ABM. Figures 1-2 further illustrates the distribution of enrollment per track and strand. Among the four tracks, the Academic track has the highest number of enrollees followed by the TVL track for both grades 11 and 12. While among the five strands under the Academic track, GAS is mostly offered, followed by STEM, ABM and HUMSS for Grade 12. These data help define which competencies may be expected from senior high school graduates.

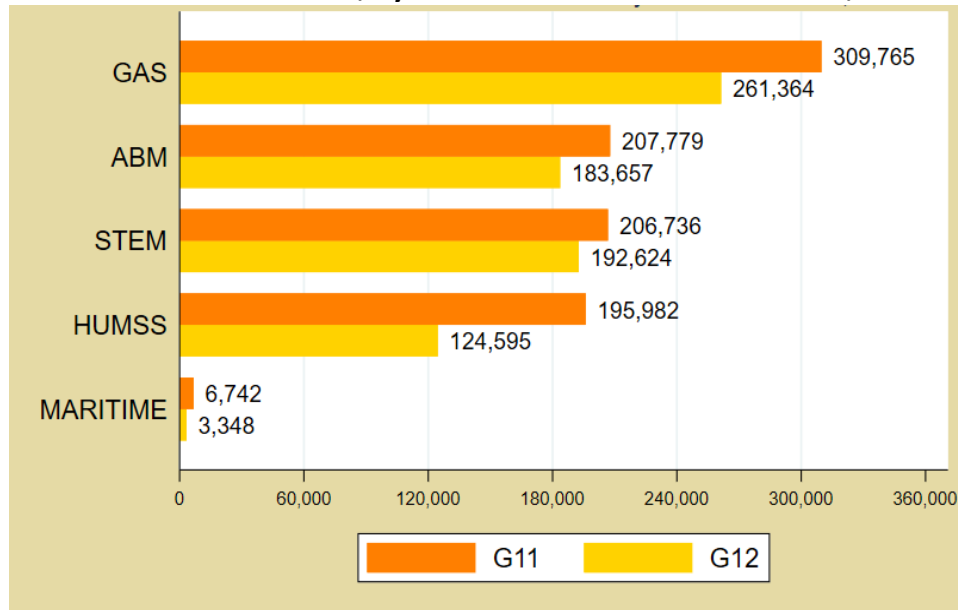
Figure 1. Distribution of enrollment, by track, SY 2017-18



Source of basic data: Department of Education.

⁵ TVL is currently taken as one strand because of the problem with recording TVL strands in the data. Unlike in the academic strands where only one strand per student was recorded, students in the TVL track are recorded as taking more than one strand that created aggregation issues.

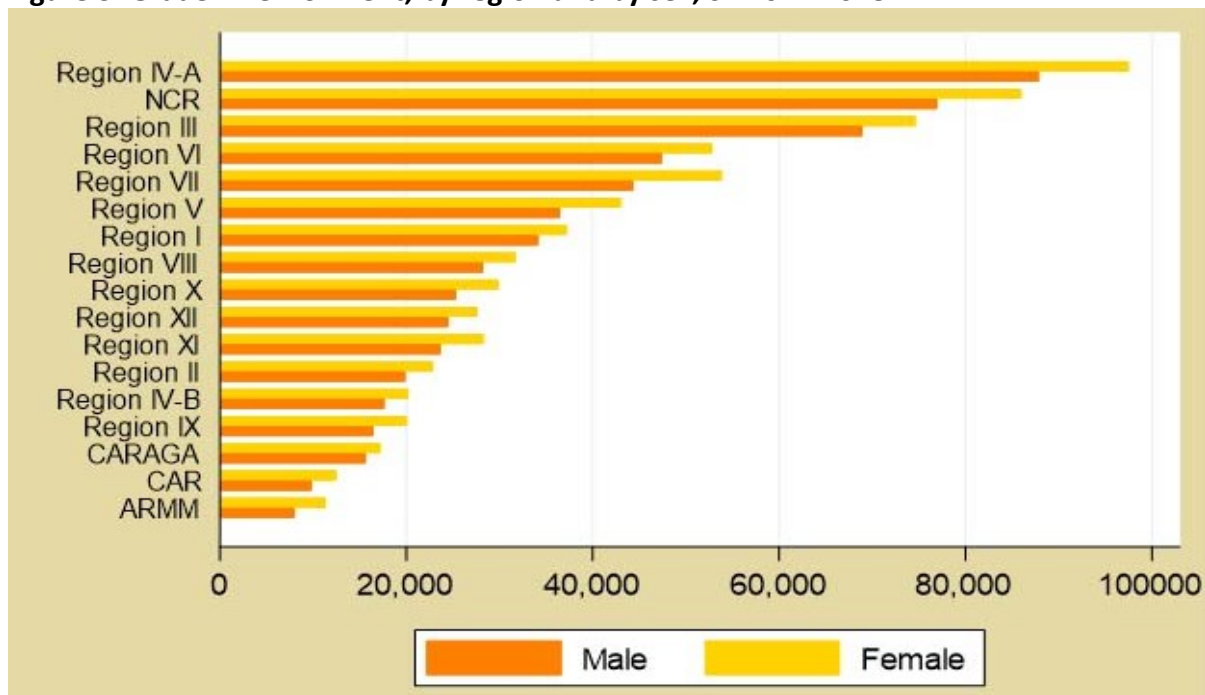
Figure 2. Distribution of enrollment, by strand under the Academic track, SY 2017-18



Source of basic data: Department of Education.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of Grade 12 enrollment by region and by sex. Understandably, the distribution reflects the population size. Calabarzon (Region IV-A), National Capital Region (NCR), and Central Luzon (Region III) have the highest Grade 12 enrollments; while Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) have the least. It also shows that there is higher enrollment of female students across all regions in the country. This reflects the known trend in the country where boys quit school earlier than girls, on average.

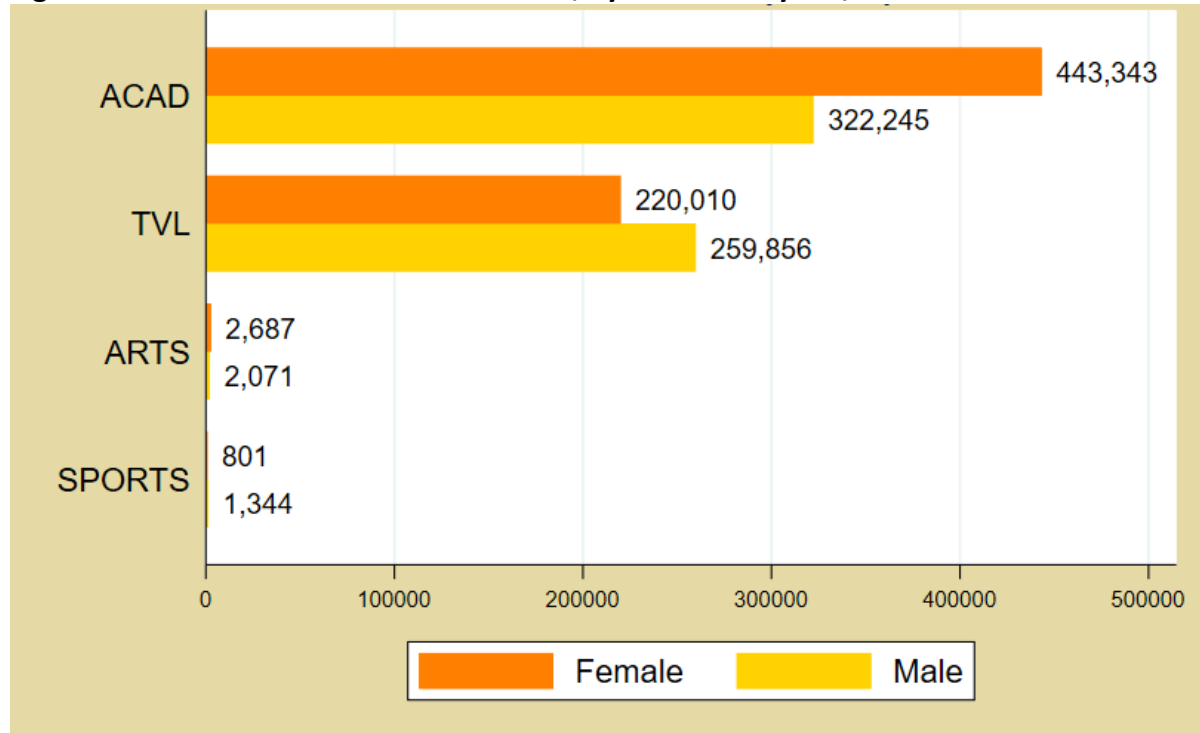
Figure 3. Grade 12 enrollment, by region and by sex, SY 2017-2018



Source of basic data: Department of Education.

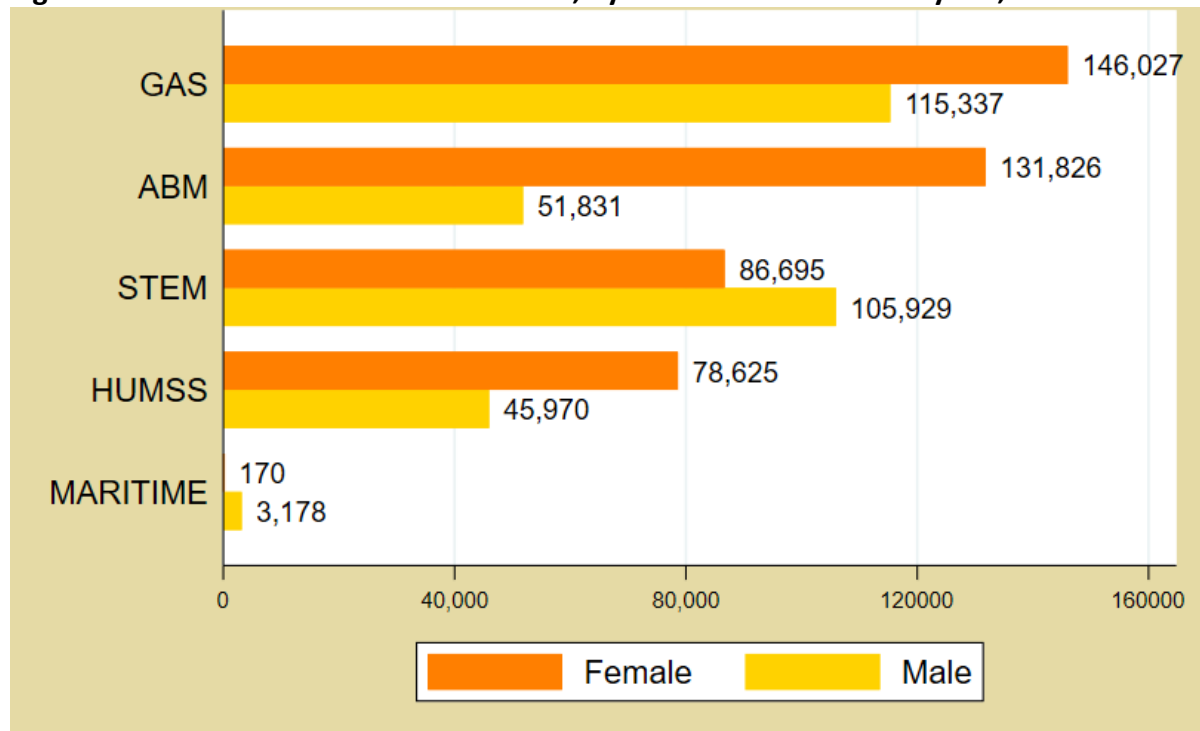
Figure 4 shows that more female students are enrolled in Academic and Arts tracks, while there are more male students enrolled in TVL and Sports. Figure 5 shows that under the Academic track, GAS, ABM and HUMSS are dominated by female students, while STEM and Maritime strands are dominated by male students.

Figure 4. Distribution of enrollment in G12, by track and by sex, SY 2017-2018



Source of basic data: Department of Education.

Figure 5. Distribution of enrollment in G12, by Academic strand and by sex, SY 2017-2018



Source of basic data: Department of Education.

As reflected in Table 1, the enrollment for Grade 12 reached about 1.25 million in SY 2017-2018.⁶ As of June 15, 2018, the national graduation rate is at 96 percent or 1.20 million (Table 4). DepEd schools has the highest graduation rate at 89.5 percent, while private schools only has 52.7 percent graduation rate.

Table 4. Graduation rates by track, SY 2017-2018

Track	Total
Sports	97.4
TVL	96.3
Academic	96.0
Arts and Designs	94.6
NATIONAL	96.1

Note: Data on SHS graduates, as of June 15, 2018; Data on SHS enrollment, as of Nov. 30, 2017

Source: EMISD of the Department of Education.

Referring back to Tables 1 to 3, particularly on the gaps and limitations in the tracks offered between public and private schools, it is worth noting that there are minimal offerings of the Arts and Design, and TVL tracks in public schools. These limitations in the offerings of the public schools may be somehow addressed by the voucher program which enables completers from public Junior High School or SUC/LUC to enroll to their preferred strands that may only be available in private schools. A total of 1.2 million is allotted in private senior high schools with a total of 626 thousand voucher recipients as of January 2018. It is interesting to know how this voucher program affects the decision-making process of students in choosing the school and the strand.

It is also interesting to see if the specific sets of competencies demanded in the labor market (see Section 4) are met by the supply of Grade 12 graduates that the current Senior High School program has produced across the country (see Table 4), and how capable the schools are in providing the students with the needed competencies. It is therefore also important to note the challenges and limitations that explains the gaps in the supply of SHS graduates and its demand in the labor market. Indicative reasons for these trends are further discussed in Sections 4 and 5.

3. Review of Related Literature

Grade 12 graduates who took the TVL track and obtained NC II and III may be hired as middle-level skilled workers in home economics (i.e., caregiving, cooking, baking, tailoring/dressmaking, events management, housekeeping, tour guiding, wellness), industrial arts (i.e., automotive, carpentry, construction painting, electrical installation, welding, machining, plumbing, refrigeration and air conditioning), agri-fishery arts (i.e., crop and animal production, animal health care, food processing, horticulture), and ICT (broadband installation, call center services, medical transcription, technical drafting). SHS graduates may also be hired in entry level positions outside the TVL track, such as bookkeeping and clerical work, among others.

⁶ Note that enrollment data do not capture enrollments beyond Nov. 30, 2017.

The available literature on employability of SHS graduates were reviewed according to the following: (i) willingness/unwillingness of firms to hire SHS graduates; (ii) indications/lack of indications that firms are hiring SHS graduates; and (iii) existing policies that impede or promote employment of SHS graduates.

3.1. *Willingness of companies to hire SHS graduates*

In a survey on hiring preferences conducted by JobStreet.com in February 2018⁷, employers who are using JobStreet website were asked if they will hire SHS graduates. The survey report⁸ revealed that 41 percent were indefinite about hiring SHS graduates, 35 percent were not willing to hire, and only 24 percent said they were willing to hire.

The employers who were indefinite about hiring SHS graduates said that they are still evaluating the company's readiness and the availability of positions while others have yet to set a definite timeline for hiring Grade 12 graduates.

Those not willing to hire gave the following reasons and concerns: available jobs were for college graduates only (36%), SHS graduates were not qualified (25%), employers have no openings for any position (20%), and SHS graduates lack work experience (16%). Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) were among those which are most reluctant to hire K-12 graduates. Having only 10-20 workers, an SME would rather not take the risk in terms of recruitment. The reluctance to hire SHS graduates may also be related to another finding reflected in the JobStreet.com report that some human resources (HR) personnel may not be knowledgeable about information related to the K-12 system. These refer to the Work Immersion Program, the tracks and strands such as the STEM and ABM strands as well as the employment-related certificates that Grade 12 students can obtain. Employers lack information about the kind of job candidates that the SHS program produces. Reasons for not willing to hire SHS graduates mentioned in the JobStreet survey are consistent with the concern of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) that the first batch of K-12 graduates might not still be ready to work in a professional workplace. It raised that the hesitance of employers to hire fresh graduates may be due to the absence of the necessary skills and training that industries need but not yet provided by the current SHS program. The minimum requirement of 80 hours or 2 weeks for the "on-the-job training" was not enough to equip students with the skills they need to be employed. Addressing the PCCI's concern, DepEd said that "the much longer hours of training, that industries prefer students to undergo, was not the ideal scenario. We cannot be heavy on work immersion and lack content. We are talking about high school graduates, the minimum competencies or subjects that they need to learn, and the work immersion component where they have to apply learnings in the classroom to make them ready for work."

Those willing to hire were mostly from industries such as business process outsourcing (BPO), manufacturing, professional services, and retail. These employers said that available jobs were entry level positions in administrative work, customer service, and sales and marketing. Attitudes/work ethics would be the primary condition for hiring, followed by interpersonal and

⁷ <https://www.jobstreet.com.ph/career-resources/fresh-graduate-hiring-shows-shifts-demand-preferences>

⁸ The JobStreet.com's 2018 Fresh Graduate Report is based on Employers' Survey on hiring preferences in Feb 2018 where five hundred three (503) company representatives representing various locations, company sizes, and industries, participated.

problem-solving skills. Most of these respondents would be willing to pay minimum wages while the rest would either offer above minimum to P12,000 per month or a salary range P12,001-15,000. According to the survey, while there were employers receptive to hiring SHS graduates, the latter will have to compete with fresh college graduates, whom employers may prefer, for the same jobs they are applying for.

The Philippine Business for Education (PBED), an industry-led advocacy group for education, also conducted a survey of companies in the organization’s network. The results presented a more positive view on the willingness of companies to hire SHS graduates. While only one in five companies are ready to hire a SHS graduate, three out of five are open to hiring. PBED clarified that “readiness and openness are two different things – the former, being the capacity for companies to hire given their availability of facilities and entry-level positions, and the latter, being the company’s willingness”. On the competencies expected from the SHS graduates, the business groups mentioned the following: both Filipino and English comprehension, communication skills, critical skills as well as confidence and maturity to handle the job.

3.2. Hiring of SHS graduates

Job entries of two online job portals, PhilJobNet and JobStreet.com were reviewed to find out whether companies are offering jobs for SHS graduates.

3.2.1. PhilJobNet

Job entries of firms in the PhilJobNet requiring “high school graduates” for the period June 5 to July 6, 2018 were reviewed to look into jobs being offered to SHS graduates. PhilJobNet is the Philippine government’s official online job site which is being administered by the DOLE-Bureau of Local Employment (DOLE-BLE). High school graduate, as referred in the job entries, covers both graduates of the old four-year HS curriculum and the SHS⁹. For the one-month period mentioned, a total of 106 companies posted 235 jobs for “high school graduates”. Data shows that most of the jobs (78.7%) require work experience with the bulk (151 out of 185) of it demanding 1-6 years of experience (Table 5). This indicates that these jobs were mostly intended for graduates of the old HS curriculum, who have already been employed and gained years of work experience.

Table 5. Qualifications required for jobs available for high school graduates

Qualifications	Number of job entries	%
HS graduate with work experience required	185	78.7
No entries for qualifications	37	15.7
HS graduate with no work experience required	12	5.1
SHS graduate	1	0.4
Total	235	100.0

Source: PhilJobNet, DOLE Bureau of Labor and Employment, June 5- July 6, 2018.

⁹ Based on inquiry made with DOLE-BLE, they are still in the process of updating the PhilJobNet system aiming to differentiate SHS graduates from the graduates of the old four-year HS curriculum.

Jobs for HS requiring no work experience, which may refer to both the SHS graduates and the recent graduates of the old HS curriculum, constitute only 5.1% of the job entries. Positions here include call center agents, janitor/housekeeping providers, electronics maintenance technician, production equipment worker, warehouse helper, food/beverage service crew, and construction carpenter. Salaries range from PhP8,000 to PhP30,000 monthly. The companies which offered the job positions were from sectors such as job placement/manpower recruitment, BPO, audiovisual company, wholesale and retail distribution, restaurant/coffee shop, engineering technology, and janitorial/maintenance service (Appendix A).

Only one employer, a job placement/manpower recruitment company, mentioned explicitly that “fresh graduates of K-to-12 are welcome to apply” for a production machine operator position with a salary of PHP 10,000-12,000 per month.

3.2.2. JobStreet.com

Job entries in JobStreet.com for one day were reviewed to check on employers offering jobs to SHS graduates. Out of the 75,078 job entries in the Philippines on October 13, 2018, around 60 job entries mentioned “open to SHS graduates”. However, of the 60 entries, some were observed to be requiring work experience. Weeding out entries which require work experience, only 20 entries were left with qualifications described as “open to SHS graduates, fresh SHS graduates can apply, and with no work experience required”. Positions offered were customer service representatives/call center agents (18), transaction processing analyst position (1), and CAD Operator (1). Almost all companies offering the jobs were from the BPO sector (Appendix B).

Based on the data gathered from the two online jobsites, there is an indication that companies are hiring SHS graduates but their numbers are very few. The jobs offered are customer service representative/call center agent positions coming from the BPO sector. In general, employers do not differentiate between the SHS graduates and the graduates of the old HS curriculum.

3.3. *Relevant policies and programs*

3.3.1. DepEd and DOLE policies related to work immersion.

The DepEd’s Guidelines on Work Immersion, as mentioned earlier in this report, offers several delivery models ranging from the minimum of 80 hours work immersion to 340 hours distributed over several terms that schools may choose from taking into consideration the required number of work immersion hours, learner’s purposes and needs, school capabilities, and compliance to TESDA, DOLE, and DepEd work immersion guidelines. Schools may also design their own delivery model as they deem fit for a specific situation or concern.

Although one of the objectives of the work immersion is to develop skills that are relevant to the needs of the job market in the area, DepEd stressed that it should not be reduced to a mere recruitment tool of a partner institution. Aside from the desired outcome of future employment of the graduates in the industry, work immersion should be designed in such a way that graduates will also acquire other skills and competencies and will qualify for other job options and not be limited to those offered by the partner institution.

3.3.2. Civil Service Commission (CSC) qualification standards.

The current recruitment system in the Philippine civil service is based on qualification standards (QS), a minimum set of requirements comprised of education, eligibility, training, experience and competence.

The 1987 Administrative Code of the Philippines (Book V, Chapter 2, Section 8), provides the classes of positions in the career service with corresponding required examinations and educational attainment. The three major levels include: a) the first level which shall include clerical, trades, crafts, and custodial service positions which involve non-professional or sub-professional work in a non-supervisory or supervisory capacity requiring less than four years of collegiate studies; b) the second level shall include professional, technical, and scientific positions which involve professional, technical, or scientific work in a non-supervisory or supervisory capacity requiring at least four years of college work up to Division Chief level; and c) the third level shall cover positions in the Career Executive Service. Most of the jobs that fit the SHS graduates are in the first level requiring less than four years of “collegiate studies”. Most jobs under the first level positions in career service fit the SHS graduates.

The job portal of the CSC provides information about available government jobs posted based on submission of various national and regional government agencies and local government units (LGUs). A random review of first level/entry level positions of the job portal entries (72,000 entries for October 19, 2018) showed the following description of education and work experience required: a) “high school graduates with no work experience”; b) “completion of 2 years in college or HS graduate with relevant vocational or trade course with no work experience”; and c) “completion of 2 years in college and with no work experience” (Table 6). There were also first level positions requiring only elementary graduates. Per phone inquiry with the CSC, HS refers to both SHS graduates and graduates of the four-year HS prior to K-to-12 while JHS completer is considered HS level. Completion of two years in college is not equivalent to SHS graduate as SHS is not considered part of “collegiate studies”. Requirements for education of first level positions in the civil service have not been adjusted to consider the SHS graduates. Such adjustment would require CSC to amend the qualification standards.

Table 6. Examples of first level positions in the civil service and corresponding salary grade (SG) level according to qualifications

Qualifications (education & work experience)	Positions	SG Level
HS graduate with no experience	Social welfare aide, water meter reader I, market ticket checker	SG levels 3 – 6
Completed 2 years in college or HS graduate with relevant vocational or trade course with no experience CS sub-professional	Data controller I, computer operator I, communications equipment operator, draftsman I, electrician I	SG levels 4-7
Completed 2 years in college and with no work experience	Secretary I; accounting clerk I; revenue collection clerk I; buyer I; tourism operations assistant; agriculture technician	SG levels 4-7
Elementary graduates	Bookbinder; driver; farm worker; utility worker; plumber	SG levels 2-5

Source: CSC Job Portal , October 19, 2018

On eligibility, any individual who has obtained COC or NC from TESDA and seeking to join the civil service, may be given equivalent eligibility by the CSC under the Skills Certificate Equivalency Program (SCEP) of TESDA (<https://tesda.gov.ph/About/TESDA/112>). Examples of these are the eligibilities for data encoder, refrigeration and air-conditioning servicing, automotive servicing, machining, plumbing, etc.

3.3.3. Senate Resolution

To support SHS graduates in finding jobs, Senate Resolution No. 700 introduced by Senator Grace Poe, was filed in the 17th Congress last April 3, 2018. The Resolution “expresses the sense of the Senate to call upon the private sector to hire graduates of the reformed K-to-12 basic education system to enable fresh graduates to find decent and fulfilling employment and to ensure the successful implementation of RA 10533, otherwise known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013”. The resolution is still pending in the Senate Committee on Education.

3.3.4. Business Groups’ Initiatives on Affirmative Hiring

The PBED convened business associations and chambers in April 2018 to reaffirm their support in ensuring employment of the graduates in preparation for the first batch of SHS graduates joining the workforce. The statement of support reads as follow, “we reaffirm our strong support for the K-to-12 reform by taking affirmative action and opening employment positions for SHS graduates and rethinking our hiring guidelines to put a premium on competencies instead of credentials.” This statement of support was reaffirmed by leaders from the country’s biggest business associations such as the Philippine Chamber of Commerce Inc. (PCCI), Makati Business Club (MBC), IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines (IBPAP), Management Association of the Philippines (MAP), People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP), and the Joint Foreign Chamber of the Philippines (JFCCP).

Also, PBEd continues its own effort for affirmative hiring through a coalition where companies join and commit to training and hiring slots to help the SHS graduates to transition from school to work. Through this initiative, DepEd collaborates with PBEd to build and maintain a strong partnership between the private sector and the academe. This partnership will pave the way for a change in hiring policies by getting industry to accommodate SHS graduates for entry-level work i.e., accounting, logistics, customer service, etc. in companies from sectors such as finance, IT-BPO, hospitality, construction-manufacturing, services, media, among others. On the side of the academe, DepEd will provide continuous information dissemination to build the perception that employment is possible for SHS graduates. Since April 2018, the initiative has secured the commitment of 17 companies. PBEd is calling on more companies to take part and join their affirmative hiring coalition.

4. Research Design and Methodology

4.1. *Research design and data collection method*

The study was designed to provide information on the labor market prospects of SHS graduates. It intends capture the experience of the first batch of SHS students and the perspectives of firms about SHS graduates. The objective is to provide a good description of both the demand and supply aspects of the emerging SHS graduates labor market. The primary data collection methods are focus group discussions (FGDs) with G12 students and key informant interviews (KIIs) with firms. The FGD and KII respondents were requested to sign the Informed Consent Form signifying that they agree to participate in the study including the permission for the audio-recording of the interview and the assurance that the data to be collected will be kept confidential. The results of the FGDs and the KIIs are supported by background information on the G12 enrollment, desk review of past studies, DepEd and DOLE guidelines on the implementation of SHS and work immersion, CSC hiring policies, and online jobsites dealing with SHS graduates.

The main objective of the FGD with grade 12 students was to know their experiences during SHS and their own assessment of their employment prospects after graduating from SHS. The discussions focused on four main topics: (i) enrolment to SHS; (ii) experience in SHS; (iii) employment prospects; and (iv) plans for higher education. The guide questions used are provided in Appendix C.

The KIIs with firms, on the other hand, was intended to gather data from the side of the firms /employers to determine their willingness to hire SHS graduates and find out the type of jobs available and fit for them. Desk review of past studies, DepEd and DOLE guidelines on the implementation of K-to-12 and work immersion, CSC hiring policies, and online jobsites was carried out prior to the actual fieldwork. The preferred respondents for the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were the Human Resource Managers or designated representatives of selected private companies and local government units often referred to in this study as “firms”. The KIIs with firms revolves around the following topics: (a) profile of the firms, (b) understanding of the K-to-12 program, (c) firms’ perspective on the qualifications of the graduates, willingness to hire, (d) adjustments to be done in hiring policies, and (e) actual hiring of graduates. The guide questions used are provided in Appendix D.

The field work for the FGDs and KIIs were conducted from March to July 2018.

4.2. *Study sites*

To generate the students’ perspective of their labor market prospects, the study wanted to interview the first batch of G12 students before they graduate. Due to this limitation of time, only specific regions were targeted as study sites. These regions include the NCR and Region IV-A and Region III. For public schools offering Grade 12, these were divided into three groups (small, medium, large) according to enrollment size. The stratification by enrollment size was used as a proxy to capture the different experiences of students during their high school years. Two schools were randomly selected from each group. The permissions to do FGDs in public schools were negotiated by the DepEd Central office through the Planning Service. Selected private schools in NCR and the Region III were individually approached, and their selection

was entirely dependent on their agreement to participate in the study. In each of the schools, a separate FGD was done for academic track and TVL track students whenever possible. Because there is no list of students provided before the FGDs, the schools were requested to select before the arrival of the research team 10 students for each session with the proviso that each academic and TVL strand offered is represented. A total of 18 schools, 12 public and 6 private, were visited for the FGDs with G12 students. Table 7 provides the background of the school visited in terms of their enrollment size and tracks offered. As expected, only the larger schools offer more tracks/strands. Notable is that, like the national tabulation, none of the schools in the sample offered all the 8 strands as at most 5 strands are offered.

Table 7. Characteristics of schools selected for FGDs with G12 students by region

Region	Size	Total G12 enrollment	Strands Offered
NCR	Small, Public	57	GAS, TVL
NCR	Small, Public	63	STEM, TVL
NCR	Medium, Public	72	ABM, TVL
NCR	Medium, Public	161	ABM, HUMSS, STEM, TVL
NCR	Large, Public	402	ABM, HUMSS, TVL
NCR	Large, Public	433	ABM, HUMSS, STEM, TVL
NCR	Private	76	ABM
NCR	Private	0	No data with DepEd
Region III	Private	19	ABM, GAS
Region III	Private	32	ABM, HUMSS, GAS
Region III	Private	171	ABM, HUMSS, STEM, GAS, TVL
Region III	Private	570	ABM, HUMSS, STEM, GAS, TVL
Region IV-A	Small, Public	42	HUMSS, GAS, TVL
Region IV-A	Small, Public	52	ABM, TVL
Region IV-A	Medium, Public	121	HUMSS, GAS, TVL
Region IV-A	Medium, Public	130	GAS, TVL
Region IV-A	Large, Public	521	GAS, TVL
Region IV-A	Large, Public	696	ABM, HUMSS, GAS, TVL

Source of Basic Data: DepEd Planning Service

For the KII with firms, the National Capital Region (NCR), Region IV-A (Calabarzon) and the province of Cebu were selected as study sites because these areas are the hubs of Philippine business and industry. NCR and Calabarzon had the greatest number of business and industry establishments in the Philippines at 187,650 or 20.5% of the total establishments and 138,301 or 15% of the total establishments, respectively (2016 Updated List of Establishments, PSA). Calabarzon has economic zones such as the Agricultural Special Economic Zone in Quezon, and the Medical Tourism Park in Batangas. Also, it has a large theme park in Laguna. Likewise, Cebu Province continues to top the list of provinces outside NCR with the greatest number of establishments. Several economic zones are found in Cebu such as Mactan Economic Zone, Cebu Light Industrial Park, and West Cebu Industrial Park.

NCR covered the local government units (LGUs) and private firms located in the cities of Pasig, Makati, Mandaluyong, and Quezon. Region IV-A or Calabarzon included firms in various economic zones in the provinces of Quezon, Batangas, Laguna and Cavite. In Cebu, locator firms in the various economic zones (Mactan Economic Zone, Cebu Light Industrial Park, West Cebu Industrial Park) as well as within Cebu City representing various industries were selected.

The conduct of KIIs in the three sites had to be extended beyond the planned schedule in order to accommodate firms who requested for postponement as well as to find replacements for those who declined to participate in the study. In NCR, the HR officer of one big firm, did not want face-to-face interview and requested to accomplish the KII guide online instead. In Cebu, KII schedule has to be adjusted to consider the long distance of some firms from the city. The preparatory activities and the conduct of KII in Region IV-A were rescheduled on the first week of July to accommodate the preparation of the highlights of KII data in NCR and Cebu. Among the three sites, Calabarzon had the greatest number of firms who refused to be interviewed. These include supermarkets, organic farms, automotive companies, bakeshops, and water district offices. Despite the request letters sent and repeated follow-ups, most of them apparently wanted to avoid discussion on topics related to hiring manpower.

4.3. Data processing, consolidation and analysis

After data collection, audio recordings of the FGDs and KIIs were listened to, transcribed, encoded, and checked against the notes of the interviewer and documenter. Qualitative data were reviewed and consolidated manually. The profiles of the participants were processed and descriptive tables, where relevant, were prepared. Cross-checking and triangulation with the desk review/literature review were done. Finally, enrollment data for SY 2017-2018 from DepEd were also processed to provide a comprehensive profile of the SHS students and schools.

5. Description of the SHS Curriculum

The K to 12 curriculum is depicted in Table 8. The 13 years of basic education is broken down into three levels, namely, kindergarten and elementary (7 years), junior high school (4 years) and senior high school (2 years). The senior high school curriculum is divided into 8 core learning areas and 4 contextualized track subjects, namely, (a) academic, (b) technical-vocational livelihood, (c) sports, and (d) arts and design. These are designed to cover the three possible exits identified by the program, namely, (a) higher education, (b) middle-level skills development and (c) employment or entrepreneurship.

Table 8. Basic Education Curriculum

Elementary	Kinder to Grade 6	
Junior high school (G7-10)	Grades 7 to 8 (Exploratory TLE)	Grades 9 to 10 (Specialized TLE)
		Tracks

Senior high school (G11-12)	8 Core Learning Areas (Language, Humanities, Communications, Mathematics, Philosophy, Science, Social Science, P.E. & Health)	Contextualized Track Subjects			
		Academic	Tech-Voc Livelihood	Sports	Arts & Design
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · GAS · STEM · ABM · HUMSS · Pre-Bac Maritime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Home economics · Agri-Fishery · Industrial arts · ICT · TVL Maritime 		
Work immersion / culminating activity / research					

Source: DepEd

6. Highlights of FGDs with Grade 12 Students

The conduct of focus group discussions (FGDs) among the first batch of graduating students from the SHS program aims to substantiate the study's intention to potentially match student competencies with the available opportunities in the labor market. In each of the 18 schools (i.e. 12 public schools and 6 private schools) that were identified, two separate FGDs were conducted among students from the Academic track and those from Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track except for those that have only Academic or TVL tracks. There are two other tracks in senior high school (SHS), namely, the Sports and Arts and Design, although most of schools only offer Academic and TVL tracks. For these FGDs, school selected a mix of 10-15 students coming from different tracks.

6.1. Profile of Grade 12 student respondents

Table 9 provides the distribution of respondents by age-group and sex. It shows that nearly two-thirds (61%) are female and a similar proportion (64%) are 18-year old. This reflects the well-known dominance of females as one goes up the education ladder in the Philippines as males drop out early from school. The expectation that SHS graduates are of legal employment age of 18

Table 9. Distribution of respondents by age and sex

Age group	Sex		Total
	Female	Male	
17 & under	69.1	30.9	100.0
	23.5	16.3	20.7
18	62.1	37.9	100.0
	65.5	62.0	64.1
19 & above	44.0	56.0	100.0
	11.0	21.7	15.2
Total	60.8	39.2	100.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0

The plan of students after graduation is very informative. Table 10 shows that three quarters are going to college, another 14% is intending to work and study, 10% are planning to work, and less than 1% are undecided. It is very revealing too that even for those in TVL track, the proportion planning to go to college is as high as those in the academic track. Understandably, there is a higher proportion in the TVL track who are intending work (19% vs %).

Table 10. Plan after graduation by track

Plan after graduation	Track		Total
	ACAD	TVL	
Go to college	58.9	41.1	100.0
	74.9	76.1	75.4
Work and study	88.9	11.1	100.0
	20.5	3.7	13.7
Get a job	24.2	75.8	100.0
	4.1	18.7	10.0
Undecided	33.3	66.7	100.0
	0.5	1.5	0.9
Total	59.3	40.7	100.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0

6.2. Enrolment to SHS

The K to 12 program adds two years in the upper secondary education, allowing students to choose a specialization based on, but not limited to, aptitude, interests, and school capacity. Prior to the start of school year, incoming SHS students are required to take the National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) to guide them in choosing their specialization in SHS, and ultimately, in making future career choices. This test is conducted among Grade 9 students enrolled both in public and private high schools. Schools are also conducting orientation sessions to provide students, as well as parents, an understanding of the two-year curriculum. With these, reasons of students for selecting the tracks, strands and schools are explored.

In choosing school, the top three reasons provided by the students, regardless of track, are as follows: 1) convenience, particularly, the school's proximity to their place of residence; 2) affordability; and 3) continuity of secondary education in the same school. Most students noted that despite having specific preference on track/strand, they still opted to enroll in the nearest school primarily out of their own judgment, and also in consideration of their parents' advice. They particularly considered safety, and ease and minimal cost of transportation. This is why affordability is also a major consideration in selecting schools. Students were inclined to choose public schools over private ones because of free tuition. Despite voucher program, which is intended for those enrolling to private schools, many of the student-respondents believed that vouchers would not guarantee them of free schooling. For those who enrolled in private schools, some noted that they choose these schools because of the good facilities and smaller class sizes.

In most of the schools visited for this study, an orientation on the K-to-12 program was conducted, and NCAE was also facilitated among incoming SHS students. NCAE results,

however, was not the primary consideration in choosing the SHS track and strand. Many students explained that they did not take the NCAE exams seriously so they could not fully rely on its results. Moreover, the NCAE recommendations did not match their interests and plans for college.

Deciding on which strand to pursue was primarily based on personal motivations, specifically, their interest in the area of specialization and the strand's relevance to their future plans after SHS. For TVL students, main considerations for choosing their respective track and strands was employability, that is, if they would easily get a job (e.g. in-demand) should they opt to work after SHS. For Academic students, majority selected their strand depending on the course that they intend to take up in college. The decision point of students in the selection of strand also appeared to be guided by their understanding of strands. Many of the students had a common perception on selected strands: (i) STEM is for those who are interested in pursuing sciences and engineering subjects; (ii) HUMSS for those who will take up BS Education; (iii) ABM for business management and accountancy; (iv) GAS is perceived to be a general strand. Because of such perception on GAS, students who were still undecided about the course that they would take up in college, had decided to enroll to the said strand.

In various cases, a significant number of students also explained that they were compelled to choose the next best track/strand in the schools that they have selected. For instance, some students initially enrolled in specific schools because of its offered their preferred tracks/strands. However, those tracks/strands were dissolved right after the start of school year, either due to lack of teachers or student enrollees, leaving them with the option to either transfer to another school or just shift to another track/strand. For some, students had to settle to another strand because their first choice was not offered in their preferred school. Students, as earlier mentioned, gave more priority in school of choice than their preferred track and strand. Other considerations that emerged from the discussions include personal reasons such as conforming to the family's advice and attending the same school with their peers. Despite different set of reasons, chosen track and strand, in most cases, helped students firm up their college plans and career choices.

6.3. Experience in Senior High School

The K to 12 program promises an enhanced curriculum developed to offer students further education that serves their interests, equips them with specialized skills and knowledge and makes them at par with their global counterparts. According to the Department of Education (DepEd), graduates from SHS may have greater employment options, including opportunities for entrepreneurial activities. Students are also expected to be better prepared for higher education, with middle-level skills that can be further enhanced to improve job opportunities.

The SHS curriculum is developed to include some subjects from the College General Education curriculum, thus allowing students to have a head start to tertiary education. It offers standardized subjects to ensure that students receive comparable education and training. Specialization in the two tracks is facilitated through subjects with special focus on every track and strand. The curriculum offers three types of subjects. First, "Core" subjects are given to all students regardless of chosen track and strand. Such subjects include Language, Humanities, Mathematics, Science, Social Science, Philosophy, and PE and Health subjects. Students diverge as they take "Applied Track" subjects, which are given to develop standard competencies among students, albeit implemented in the context of chosen track and strand.

Third, the “Specialized Track” subjects, which also set students apart, cover different contents, developing different sets of competencies among students.

In the FGDs, students expressed varied opinions about their SHS experience, which covers their thoughts about the subjects they had taken, the implementation of SHS curriculum, and effectiveness of the two-year program vis-à-vis its objectives. Most of the time, students would assess importance of subjects depending on their relevance to the track and strand they were enrolled. Aside from the specialized subjects, both the Academic and TVL students found the following subjects to be very useful: Entrepreneurship, Oral Communication, and Work Immersion.

Students also tend to enjoy and excel in subjects that were related to their area of specialization, especially in the case of most TVL students, who preferred subjects that enhance their practical skills. This is the reason why they believed that Math and Science subjects may be less relevant compared to the specialized subjects¹⁰. Interest of students, which may not be limited only to their area of specialization, somehow influenced the extent of their appreciation of the subject. On the other hand, there were also subjects which appeared to be challenging for most of the students. Research, in particular, was the most difficult for many of the students. The challenge came from the required rigor and time in finishing research outputs, working in groups. Others also highlighted burden from research costs (e.g. computer and internet rental, printing).

Generally, satisfaction with how subjects were handled was largely dependent on the effectiveness of teachers. Nonetheless, students also had an impression that schools were not completely prepared in this adjustment. Some of the external challenges that were mentioned regardless of track are as follows:

- i. Lack of required facilities (especially for TVL students), textbooks, and materials for demonstration purposes;
- ii. Dissatisfaction with the teaching methods and class and curriculum management, e.g., combining class sections (TVL and Academic tracks), offering subjects in Grade 12 instead of Grade 11, offering both Research 1 and 2 during the same semester when these are supposed to be conducted in two separate semesters;
- iii. Teachers handle subjects that are not related to their specialization and sometimes, they handle too many subjects and other tasks which compromise the quality of teaching, as well as learning of the students, and;
- iv. Having a standardized exam even if teachers cover different contents or topics.

Despite challenges in the implementation of the new curriculum, students, in general, thought that senior high school allowed them to be trained further in their chosen area of specialization. Most of the students, apart from specialized knowledge and skills, have likewise developed soft skills such as communication, people skills, critical thinking, positive attitude, teamwork and work ethic. And although there were a few who felt that the additional two years of schooling could already be spent for working, most still realized the value of SHS in their preparation for tertiary education and in developing their competencies that could help should they decide to join the workforce.

¹⁰ Specialized subjects are subjects that are specifically available under the track and strand that the students have chosen.

6.4. *Employment prospects*

A significant feature of the K to 12 program is the integration of technical-vocational education curriculum in senior high school. Section Five of the *Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013* mandates the DepEd to work mainly with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in crafting harmonized basic and tertiary curricula, with consultations with relevant agencies such as the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), student organizations and school associations. With the expanded curriculum, K-to-12 is expected to increase options for high school graduates, not only in pursuing tertiary education, but also in exploring employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

The FGDs explored the students' perception in terms of their employability upon graduation from senior high school. Students were asked to look at the training they had during SHS, evaluate their readiness in joining the workforce and identify the target jobs should they opt to work after SHS. This subsection also investigates the different factors that may persuade students to change their plans after SHS (i.e. factors that would make them go to college or skip college and work).

Most of the students, both under the Academic and TVL tracks, were not entirely confident that they would easily get a job after SHS. Students under the Academic track believed that they would still need to go to college because the training that they received in SHS was not meant to make them more employable, unlike in the case of the TVL students. For those under the TVL track, the answers were mixed. Some believe that they were employable since they were able to develop, at the very least, the basic skills needed to get the jobs that they intend to apply to, with the National Certificate (NC) Level II as their proof of competence. In the K to 12 program, graduates can strengthen their employment eligibility by obtaining a NC or TESDA Certificates of Competency (COC). These certifications granted by TESDA imply that aspiring workers have met defined competency standards. Under SHS, TVL students can take the assessment exam for NC, depending on the competencies they have developed. Graduates from ABM strand, under the Academic track can likewise apply for NC in Bookkeeping.

However, many of the respondents did not experience supposed benefits of NC on employability. Although schools intended to facilitate NC application of students, they had failed to arrange set NC assessment or examination schedule for the students prior to their graduation. In addition, students would also need to shoulder the costs of the application and examination fees.

To some students, acquiring NCs wouldn't guarantee higher employability because prospective employers, especially large firms, would still prefer applicants with college degree and those with few years of work experience. These students were not completely confident about their employability despite the training and education they had in SHS. Overall, while the students felt that SHS has prepared and trained them for both work and further studies, completing tertiary education will give them the competence and confidence they would need to land a job.

As for the actual jobs that they might get after SHS, they felt that employment opportunities for SHS graduates might be limited to entry-level positions, support staff or service-oriented jobs. Hence, they do not expect to earn high salaries should they get hired, although they note that they should be able to at least get minimum-waged jobs. Some of them knew that jobs may

be paid with much higher wages in certain industries such as BPOs (e.g. call centers) and in abroad (e.g. around PhP100,000 per month). Below are the lists of prospective jobs that most students mentioned during the FGDs.

Table 11. Lists of prospective jobs, by track

Academic	TVL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bakery worker / Patisserie • Barista • Business owner • Call center / BPOs • Carpentry (basic) • Cashier / saleslady • Encoder • Factory worker • Front-desk officer (i.e. receptionist) • National government / Local government unit (LGU) worker (e.g. human resources department, DOLE’s Special Program for the Employment of Students) • Office worker / clerk / secretary / assistant (e.g. bookkeeper, photocopier) • Online jobs • Part-time coach • Service crew (e.g. fast food chains, hotels, restaurants) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bakery worker / patisserie • Business owner (e.g. fruit stalls) • Call center • Computer technician / assistant • Encoder • Factory worker • IT-related • Maintenance (e.g. electricians) • Manager • Office worker / clerk / assistant • Quality control • Saleslady • Service crew (e.g. fast food chains, hotels, restaurants) • Website analyst • Welder / fabricator

Table 12 presents the prospective salaries of the students should they opt to work after SHS. While most would apply to jobs that are related to their respective track and strands, some are willing to take other jobs that may not be aligned with their training as long as they deem that the offered salary is sufficient for their needs. Seemingly, TVL students have higher salary-range expectations than the Academic students. Indeed, during the discussions, the latter tend to be less selective in terms of the salary that they could get since their intention was to work temporarily (e.g. summer jobs) to save up for their college education. The TVL students, who may have more awareness of the labor market rates especially for like them who have specialized skills, tend to have relatively high expectations.

Table 12. Ranges of prospective salaries of SHS graduates, by specialization/type of work

Academic	TVL
<p><i>Service crew:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast food chains – PHP 450 per day 	<p><i>Service crew:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast food chains – around PHP200 per half-day; PHP60 per hour • Restaurants – PHP 500 per day
<p><i>BPO worker:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call centers – PHP 12,000 to PHP15,000 per month; PHP10,000 and below for trainees and part-time 	<p><i>BPO worker:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call centers: PHP 5,000 –PHP 20,000

Academic	TVL
<p><i>Basic carpentry work:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHP 400-500 	<p><i>Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abroad: PHP 120,000 to PHP150,000 per month • Local: PHP 400-500 per day
<p><i>Full-time jobs (no specific job):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCR rate: PHP 8,000 to 20,000 per month • Provincial rate: PHP 6,600 per month or PHP 300 per day • Others: PHP3,000 to PHP6,000 per month 	<p><i>Full-time jobs (no specific job):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCR rate: PHP 13,000 to15,000 per month or PHP 600 to 700 per day • Others: At least PHP8,000 – PHP12,000 per month
<p><i>Minimum-waged jobs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCR rate: PHP 512 or PHP 7,000 per month • Laguna rate: PHP 356 per day 	<p><i>Minimum-waged jobs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCR rate: PHP 512 per day • Laguna rate: PHP 356 per day • Subic rate: PHP 350 to 380 per day
<p><i>Summer jobs / Part-time:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCR rate: PHP 300 per day; PHP 5,000 per month • Under DOLE’s SPES: PHP 170.45 per day 	<p><i>Summer jobs / Part-time:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCR rate: PHP 300 per day
	<p><i>TVL Maritime:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No definite amount given but can earn in dollars as ordinary seaman, which could go higher depending on the position, e.g. messman • A student mentioned they could earn about PHP20,000-PHP30,000 locally, and significantly higher when abroad in a cruise ship
	<p><i>ICT strand (Animation program):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animator abroad – PHP100,000 to PHP150,000 (good opportunities)

Aside from certifications earlier mentioned, students were also asked to identify acquired skills and competencies that could possibly match qualification requirements of potential employers. Students recognized the importance of computer literacy and formal writing skills both in getting a job and in meeting the academic requirements in college. Many of the students had again noted the value of soft skills, and how they had developed these from their experiences in SHS classes (e.g. classes in *Oral Communication, Personal Development, Immersion program* and *Research*). Specialized track subjects helped them focus more on the development of specific skills and knowledge that could build up employability. Likewise, the immersion program was particularly useful in preparing the students, especially TVL graduates, by exposing them to actual work environment. In addition to employability, SHS graduates, had a chance to explore entrepreneurial ideas during SHS, some of which, students had planned to use when they start a small business while in college.

Even with skills and qualifications that could increase their employability, most of the students were firm about their plans to pursue higher education because of the perception that college degree raises better employment opportunities and salaries. Nonetheless, there were few, especially among TVL students, who had planned to skip college and work right after SHS due to different reasons including the need to help their parents provide for family needs. Some of them would consider going to college only if the cost of studying, including allowances, would be supported through an external funding, e.g. scholarships.

6.5. Plans for Higher Education

As previously discussed, almost all respondents of this study, both from TVL and Academic tracks, were planning to enroll to college. Most of them had decided to pursue courses related their tracks and strands. To some extent, this finding affirms one of the objectives of K-to-12, that is, to give graduates the same opportunity to prepare for-and pursue college education regardless of their chosen tracks. Thus, SHS track only firms up selection of specialization, but it does not prescribe on student's decision on whether to go to college or apply for a job after graduation. However, many students, both from Academic and TVL tracks, raised their concern about certain colleges and universities that requires a "bridging program" for off-track SHS students. It was unclear to them how these institutions plan to implement the said program. Other potential issues that were mentioned are as follows: 1) not being able to pass the entrance exams of the desired college; 2) financial needs; 3) scholarships that require maintaining grades; 4) difficulty in coping with a course that is unrelated with their strands; and 5) delayed releases of needed requirements from their respective senior high schools.

An important deciding factor in selecting between private and public HEI is the cost of attending college. Almost all the students were planning to enroll to state universities/colleges (SUCs) or local universities/colleges (LUCs), while others were planning to apply for scholarship to be able to enroll to a private university. Aside from tuition fees, students applying to SUCs and LUCs also considered the following: (1) location, (2) reputation of the school relative to the course they plan to take up (usually based on performance on licensure exams), and (3) availability of their preferred course in the school. It must be noted, however, that the recent Free Tuition policy was not a primary influence on the students' desire to pursue tertiary education. Moreover, applying for a part-time job or summer job was also an option for others who would need further financial support for their college plans.

Results of the FGDs generally tell that SHS graduates, particularly the first batch, still have high premium for tertiary education. There was a common perception that college degree can create better employment potentials. Nevertheless, SHS education was believed to be useful and effective in terms of enhancing the skills and expanding knowledge of students. As regard to the implementation of the SHS program, what remains to be addressed is the students' seemingly limited perspective and understanding of the SHS curriculum and the tracks and strands. Based on some FGD sessions, Academic track students felt that the SHS program tends to benefit TVL students more because these students were provided with more vocational training, whereas Academic students are expected to proceed to college. On the other hand, there is an impression that TVL students will need to catch up should they decide to pursue college education compared to their counterparts from the Academic track. It must be emphasized that, while SHS develops certain level of specialization, the two-year curriculum likewise offers standardized subjects and approaches, which make it comprehensive rather than restrictive. As previously explained, SHS students are expected to have equal footing in terms

of core knowledge and skills developed during SHS. Thus, regardless of track and strand, graduates should be equipped, at certain level of standards, with the capacity needed for higher education and for employment.

Aside from the SHS curriculum itself, it is also important to note that the students' overall learning experience is highly dependent on the effectiveness of the teachers, availability of facilities, learning materials and equipment / tools needed especially for the specialized subjects. The alignment of the teachers' background (e.g. specialization, trainings) vis-à-vis their respective teaching assignments is seen as a crucial factor in ensuring that the learning outcomes among students are achieved.

7. Highlights of the KIIs with the Firms

The discussion of results covers the description of the participating firms and the highlights of the KII with the firms. The KII highlights are divided into the following major parts: a) firms' understanding of the SHS program; b) willingness or unwillingness of firms to hire SHS graduates, the type of jobs available for SHS graduates and qualifications and competencies required; c) adjustments in hiring policies; d) trainings needed to improve employability of SHS graduates; e) whether firms are actually hiring SHS graduates and the types of jobs given to hired SHS graduates; and f) whether SHS graduates are work-ready.

7.1. Profile of Participating Firms

Thirty-three Human Resource Managers/Officers from 26 firms were interviewed using the KII guide. The KII covered 9 firms in NCR, 9 in Cebu, and 8 in Calabarzon. An official from a national chamber of industries was also interviewed (Table 13).

In NCR, respondents included six private companies and three LGUs which are mostly large firms based on number of employees. The largest firms are a BPO company, two city government offices, a multi-industry company (dealing with financial services, real estate, rural banks, and hotels), and a popular fast food chain. Other participating large firms included a distributor of sports wear and accessories, a real estate developer of midrise condominiums, and an LGU-financed university. One medium-sized hotel also took part in the KII.

In Cebu, five large and four medium-sized companies were involved in the KII. The large companies come from sectors such as agribusiness, manufacturing of high-end furniture, ship building, shipping line, and hospitality/hotel. The medium-sized companies included a builder of yachts and other marine transport, a manufacturer of electronic parts, a hotel, and a management company for a major shopping center.

Table 13. Type of firms who participated in the KII

Area/Type of firms	No. of firms	No. of Employees	Size Category ¹¹
<i>National Capital Region (NCR)</i>	9		
Wholesale and retail distributor	1	500-600	Large
Real estate developer	1	304	Large
Hotel (four-star)	1	139	Medium
Multi-industry	1	7,600	Large
BPO	1	60,000	Large
Fast food chain	1	5,000	Large
LGUs (city government)	2	8,000 – 9,000	Large
LGU university	1	750	Large
<i>Cebu Province</i>	9		
Agri-business	1	1,500	Large
Manufacturing (furniture, ship, marine transport, electronic parts)	2	253-739	Large
	2	106- 124	Medium
Hospitality/hotel	2	80 – 200	Medium to large
Shopping center management	1	180	Medium
Shipping line	1	400	Large
<i>Calabarzon</i>	8		
Private hospital	1	414	Large
Manufacturing (coffee products, coconut products)	2	23 – 2,000	Small to large
Agri-business	1	108	Medium
Restaurant	1	9	Micro
Resort (swimming)	2	5-40	Micro to small
Theme park	1	500 – 1,000	Large
<i>Subtotal</i>	26		
<i>National chamber of industries</i>	1		
<i>Total</i>	27		

In Calabarzon, respondents were a mix of micro, small, medium, and large-sized companies. Large firms who were interviewed included a theme park, a private hospital, and a manufacturer of coconut products for export. Other companies who participated were a medium-sized agribusiness company engaged in layer chicken farming and veterinary supplies distribution, a small manufacturer cum cooperative of coffee products, a small swimming resort, and two micro enterprises (a restaurant and a resort).

¹¹ Enterprise size according to number of employees based on National Statistics Office (now Philippine Statistics Authority) grouping where large has more than 250 employees, medium-sized has 50-249 employees, small has 10-49 employees, and micro has less than 10 employees.

7.2. *Understanding of the SHS program*

All respondents have some understanding of the SHS program, the most common of which is the additional two years in high school. They know bits and pieces of information about the program as summarized below.

Most of the respondents understand that the SHS provide options or choices to students when they graduate. SHS may prepare students for academic work in college or equip them with technical and vocational skills to prepare them for employment or entrepreneurship.

Some are aware of the specific subjects being taught like advance subjects in math, accounting, and research in preparation for college. Others said that subjects taught are already connected to the kind of job that they will apply for after graduation and mentioned specializations such as beauty care, massage, electronics, computer-aided design (CAD), welding, carpentry, and sewing.

Other firms said that SHS students, regardless of their track and specialization, need to undergo work immersion along their chosen field of specialization to be able to find a job after graduation. It was noted that some respondents used the term “OJT” and work immersion interchangeably indicating that they have limited knowledge on the nature and purpose of DepEd’s work immersion program.

There were employers who view SHS education as equivalent to the educational attainment of second year of college. Others mentioned that the additional two years in HS allows graduates to reach the legal age of work which is 18 years old.

A few said K-to-12 is a tool for the country to reach the same level of education and skills that the other countries have. Students will be at par with the educational system of other countries should they continue their studies abroad.

Several firms said that while they have come across SHS education/program through radio and television news, they have no in-depth knowledge of the curriculum/specialization the SHS graduates have studied, nor the skills they have developed throughout their two years in SHS that will fit the industry. They do not know what kind of training the SHS students need from the businesses and what the SHS graduates could possibly offer to the industry in return.

In general, employers know bits and pieces of information about the SHS program. However, the knowledge employers have about the SHS curriculum/specialization as well as the quality of its first batch of graduates, are not adequate enough. Some said they need to study and research to be familiar with the SHS curriculum and program requirements. Since the SHS program has just produced its first batch of graduates, most employers said they need to be exposed to the graduates to know them better, i.e., what are the knowledge the graduates have acquired, what are the skills they have developed, are the developed skills enough and appropriate for the current needs of the industry.

7.3. Willingness to hire SHS graduates

When asked if they were willing to hire SHS graduates, almost all of the twenty-six firms answered yes. Only two said that they will not hire SHS graduates at this time. However, from among those willing to hire, only two companies (from the hospitality/tourism and manufacturing sectors) believe that SHS graduates already have the skills to be employed and what is needed is for the employers to hone these skills. The rest of those who said yes gave preconditions for hiring such as requiring competencies and specialized skills, improved work immersion, and offering only low positions due to the nature of their business as well as existing government hiring policies. The preconditions, which somehow indicate uncertainty in hiring the SHS graduates, are congruent/consistent with the reasons (i.e., SHS graduates were not qualified, and SHS graduates lack work experience) given by the employers for unwillingness to hire based on the JobStreet survey in February 2018.

7.3.1. Yes, will hire SHS graduates

For those who said they will hire, they mentioned the following preconditions that will propel their actions.

7.3.1.1. SHS graduates should have the specialized skills needed by the industry. Some firms shared that they can accommodate graduates of both academic and TVL tracks if they have skills on marketing and customer service. One said they can offer positions in the hotel front desk but applicants should have specialized skills in using and operating the OPERA¹² system. Others mentioned skills on computer, carpentry, construction painting, and quality control. Other firms said that there is a chance that SHS graduates will be selected if they show learning and innovation skills such as analytical and communication skills. Respondents were also looking for personal qualifications such as confidence, maturity, and sense of accountability. Some would hire SHS graduates if they are trainable, passionate about learning, assertive, and internally motivated to grow. According to one respondent, success depends more on the behavior or attitude rather than skills.

7.3.1.2. SHS graduates should have obtained TESDA national certificates. Some employers expressed preference for applicants who has TESDA NC II, i.e., on housekeeping, welding, automotive, and other middle level skills. For them, the TESDA certificate guarantees actual experience and not just textbook knowledge.

7.3.1.3. SHS graduates must have undergone longer work immersion program. Most respondents said that 80 - 120 hours of work immersion is not sufficient to learn anything substantial. The minimum hours of immersion may somehow give the students an idea about the industry, but it is not a strong foundation to prepare them for work. Respondents from the hotel and restaurant industry said the DepEd's minimum hours of work immersion will not pass their standards as they look for graduates who should have undergone "OJT" in other hotels for 300- 450 hours. A real estate/construction company suggested longer internship of 300 – 700 hours. A manufacturing firm suggested to have a one-month minimum work immersion to allow students enough experience in all aspects of the job. Another manufacturing company suggested one semester or around 1800 hours to allow enough time

¹² Oracle hospitality OPERA cloud services is a mobile platform for hotel management and booking system.

for exposure to the industry. A shipping line said that the DepEd's minimum hours of immersion is for mere familiarization/orientation which lack in-depth learnings and will not be enough to be ready for work. For others, internship standard should be a maximum of six months and minimum of three months. Respondents also pointed out that there should be quality experience in the immersion process, i.e., providing actual activities relevant to the students' specialization.

7.3.1.4. Only positions lower than technical will be offered because of the critical/sensitive nature of the jobs in the industry. Because of the critical nature of their business, there are firms that are not yet ready to hire SHS graduates for the technical positions, thus they offer only low-level positions. These are firms involved in construction which have to ensure the structural safety of residential buildings and offices. Another firm, involved in providing medical and health services, have to be attentive and careful of the individual needs and complaints of their clients.

Only low positions in the local government units (LGUs) can be offered due to existing policies of the Civil Service Commission (CSC). LGUs are bound by the CSC Qualification Standards (QS), i.e., education and civil service eligibility, required for each position/salary grade level in the government. According to the LGU respondents, because of these requirements, they can only give the lowest position levels to SHS graduates who are considered within the same level as high school graduates of the old curriculum. Examples of these positions are maintenance technicians, laborer, utility worker, and driver. Even for clerks, the CSC-QS requires at the minimum, graduates of two-year vocational courses or completers of second year college. As of the time of the KII, the LGUs do not consider the SHS graduates as equivalent to the level of collegiate studies.

Aside from the preconditions to hiring presented, other firms gave other reasons for willingness to hire SHS graduates. A multi-industry firm, an agri-business firm, and a private hospital said they have no option but to hire SHS graduates as they have foreseen gaps in the number of college graduates (as a result of the additional two years in HS) in the next few years. One hospital shared that they usually hire nurses for their heart and respiratory technician positions. Since there will be no nursing graduates in the next two years, it will affect their operations. At the time of the interview, they were already having difficulty in recruiting nurses. They are open to hire SHS graduates provided they have specialization in nursing care which is a more advanced course than caregiving under the Home Economics strand.

Some employers are not particular whether they will hire SHS or not, as they give premium to work experience related to the position being applied for regardless of educational attainment. Few of them said they will hire SHS graduates as seasonal workers as long as they pass the exam and interview and perform satisfactorily during the probationary period.

7.3.2. Will not hire at this time

One respondent disclosed that they will not hire SHS graduates at this time. They have a standing policy of hiring applicants with college degree because they have to maintain their stature as a university. Unless there is a shift in their strategic direction, i.e., if they become training providers in the future, then they can hire the best of the SHS graduates as technical-vocational trainers. A fast food chain company said that they have to revise/update first their internal policies and structure for hiring and discuss these with their Corporate Labor Relations

and Legal team. Another company said that while they may hire SHS graduates for their land-based jobs, they could not do this for their sea-based positions since the qualifications/requirements for these are regulated by the Philippine Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA).

7.4. Type of jobs available to SHS graduates, qualifications and salary

7.4.1. Type of jobs available to SHS graduates by sector

The firms' responses on the type of jobs available to SHS graduates were grouped according to the 2012 Philippine Standard Occupational Classification (PSOC), a statistical classification of the different occupational groups of the working population published by the Philippine Statistical Authority (<https://psa.gov.ph/content/philippine-standard-occupational-classification-psoc>). The classification is based on jobs and skills levels¹³ patterned after the 2008 International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO) of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Generally, the jobs available to SHS graduates fall under the PSOC's lowest major occupational groups. Most jobs offered by the employers require second level or middle level skills such as entry level positions in the clerical support, crafts and trades, and sales and services (Table 14; see also Appendices D-F). Many employers, however, also offer elementary occupations that require only first level skills which are below the skills expected to be acquired by the SHS graduates. Also, it was noted that some companies offer entry level positions (although very few) which require third skill level, i.e., information and communications technology and clinical technicians under the associate professionals group.

Table 14. Type of jobs (based on occupational groups) available to SHS graduates by sector

Sectors	Occupational Groups					
	Technician & Associate Professional (Skill level 3)	Clerical support (Skill level 2)	Service & sales (Skill level 2)	Crafts & related trades (Skill level 2)	Plant & machine operators (Skill level 2)	Elementary occupation (Skill level 1)
Manufacturing (6 firms)	IT technician	Bookkeeper, Assistant bookkeeper, Assistant accountant, Accounting clerk, Payroll clerk,	<u>Sales</u> Sales assistant <u>Services</u> Asst barista	Equipment maintenance technician, Automotive technician, Electrician, Mechanical technician, Welder,	Driver, Logistics driver,	Utility/maintenance, Messenger, Hand packer/sealer, Warehouse helper, Delivery

¹³ ISCO skill level 3: involve the performance of complex technical and practical tasks that require an extensive body of knowledge in a specialized field; generally require high level of literacy and numeracy and well-developed interpersonal communication skills; studied at HEI for 1-3 years.

ISCO skill level 2: involve performance of tasks such as operating machinery and electronic equipment, driving vehicles, maintenance and repair of electrical and mechanical equipment and manipulation and storage of information; completion of first to second stage of secondary education with component of specialized vocational education

ISCO skill level 1: involve performance of simple and routine physical or manual tasks; may require use of hand-held tools or simple electrical equipment; most occupations may require physical strength; completion of primary education may be required

		Office clerk, Stocks encoder, Purchaser/ buyer		Carpenter, Spray painter, Wood sanding, Wood stoning, Wood laminator, Ship- bender, Coffee grinding & blending operator, Coconut dryer operator, Laboratory sampler, Production quality control, Production checker		helper, Jute sack sewer, Coco sheller, Coco parer, Sorter, Picker, Coco classifier
Agri- Business (2 firms)		Accounting clerk, Office clerk, Field clerk, Warehouse clerk, Filing & encoding clerk	Sales clerk, Order preparer, Dispatching clerk	Automotive technician, Electrical technician, Welder	Driver, Utility driver, Forklift operator	Utility men, Office cleaner, Messenger, Poultry helper, Packers, Ware- house men, Delivery helper
Wholesale & retail distribution (1 firm)			Inventory asst., Cashier, Racket stringers, Exercise eqpt specialist, Running consultant, Sales clerk	Maintenance/repair technician, Automotive technician	Driver	Messenger, Picker, Warehouse stacker
Real estate (1 firm)		HR support clerk, Documentation clerk, Accounting clerk	Marketing & sales clerk			
Hotel & restaurant/reso rt (6 firms)	IT technician	Liaison office asst, receiving clerk, Front desk officer/ receptionist, Telephone operator, Business center attendant, Purchasing & receiving clerk, Accounting clerk	<u>Sales</u> Cashier, Sales & banquet coordinator, Sales clerk <u>Services</u> Hotel housekeeping, Building & grounds care- taker, Bartender, Waiter, Cook			Messenger, Swimming pool attendant, Public area attendant, Room attendant, Cleaner, Kitchen steward, Packer
Fast food Chain (1 firm)		Has to be discussed with Legal Team				
Theme park (1 firm)						Admission attendant, Guest service attendant, Games & rides attendant, Souvenir shop attendant

Shopping mall management (1 firm)		Recruitment office asst., Leasing & tenant relations office asst., Accounting office assistant	<u>Sales</u> Leisure & entertainment center cashier, Sales clerk, Marketing & sales office assistant			Leisure & entertainment center attendant, Leisure & entertainment center porter
Multi-industry (1 firm)	IT	Front desk officer, Receptionist, Business center attendant, Telephone operator	Transactions processing, Loan clerk, Sales report & monitoring clerk		Driver	Messenger, Room attendants
Shipping line (transport) (1 firm)	IT		Cashier	Welders, Carpenters, Plumbers, Aircon technicians	Truck drivers, Forklift operators	
Hospital (1 firm)	Nursing assistant, Operating room technician	Receptionist, Admitting/ registration clerk, Medical records clerk, Benefits clerk, Clinical & laboratory sections clerk		Electrician, Plumber		
BPO (1 firm)		Call center agents, Customer service reps	Call center agents (sales)			
LGU (3 firms)		Copying clerk, Data encoding clerks, Administrative assistants	Storekeeper	Maintenance & repair technicians (electrician, automotive, refrigeration, air-condition), Mason	Drivers, Elevator operator	Messenger, Laborer, Utility worker, Construction laborer, Street sweeper

Note: Occupational groups are based on the 2012 PSOC published by the PSA

Clerical support positions such as clerks, bookkeepers, office assistants, receptionists, and call center agents, among others, are offered by firms in the sectors such as manufacturing, agribusiness, real estate, hotels and restaurants/resort, shopping mall management, multi-industry, hospital, BPO, and LGUs. Positions for call center agents and customer service representatives are numerous in BPO companies.

Crafts and related trades works are mostly available in the manufacturing sector. But these can also be found in other sectors such as agribusiness, wholesale and retail distribution, transport, hospital, and in the LGUs. Jobs such as small machine operators, automotive technician, electrician, welder, plumber, carpenter, and construction painter, among others, fall under this occupational group.

Jobs in sales and services are offered by firms in the hotels and restaurants/resort, wholesale and retail distribution, shopping mall management, BPOs, and agribusiness. Under sales, respondents offer jobs such as sales clerk, call center salespersons, cashier, and sales inventory assistant, among others. Under services, available job positions are hotel housekeeping provider, waiter, bartender, cook, and building and grounds caretaker.

Elementary occupations, which only require first level skills and completion of primary education, are also offered to SHS graduates by most private companies and the LGUs. The private companies are led by the sectors in manufacturing, hotel and restaurant, agribusiness and theme park. Positions offered include utility worker, street sweeper, laborer, warehouse helper, warehouse stacker, coconut sheller, production sorter and picker, poultry helper, kitchen steward, pool cleaner, office cleaner, messenger, theme park attendants, leisure and entertainment center porter, among others.

Jobs like utility drivers, heavy truck drivers, fork lift operators and elevator operators under the machine operators' occupational group are also offered by companies in the manufacturing, agribusiness, wholesale and retail distribution, multi-industry, and transport sectors as well as in the LGUs.

It is good to note that even if it is few, there are entry level positions under the skill level three or associate level professionals group offered to SHS graduates. The information technology (IT) technician positions are available in a manufacturing firm, a hotel, a multi-industry firm, and a shipping line. Positions for nursing assistants/technicians and operating room (OR) technicians are now available in a hospital. This is due to the current lack of nursing graduates applying for the positions.

7.4.2. Qualifications and competencies and salaries

This section provides the qualifications and competencies the firms are looking for in a SHS graduate for identified available jobs. In a way, it gives stakeholders an idea on what work and behavioral skills should be developed in the SHS graduates to be employed mostly in middle-level skilled jobs. On the other hand, the information gathered also reflect the hiring policies of the firms/companies interviewed, whether they give premium to competencies or still give more importance to educational attainment.

In general, respondent firms are reluctant to hire fresh Grade 10/JHS completers for any of the available job positions because of the DOLE's policy that penalize the act of employing persons below 18 years old. Most manufacturing companies and one hospital expressed apprehension of being charged with child labor and child abuse if they hire minors.

As previously mentioned in section F.2.3.1, jobs available for SHS graduates are mostly second skills level or middle-level skilled jobs requiring secondary education such as the clerical support staff, sales and services workers, machine operators (drivers and related jobs), and crafts and related trades workers. There are also elementary occupations available which require the first (lowest) skill level and primary education. Few jobs are available for associate/technician professionals requiring third skills level and education in HEIs.

7.4.2.1. For the clerical support occupations. One large firm requires college graduates but it can adjust if applicants have work and behavioral skills relevant to the clerical positions. Other large firms are open to hiring SHS graduates but the latter have to compete with college graduates or graduates of a two-year college course which employers usually prefer. This manner of hiring somehow denies the SHS graduates the chance to be employed despite the fact that the positions require middle level skills only.

Meanwhile, one small firm does not differentiate graduates of SHS, previous fourth year HS, and JHS/Grade 10 completers because it gives importance to personal traits and skills (i.e., industrious, dependable, trainable, and interested in work). In this case, SHS graduates are still perceived to be on equal footing and have no comparative advantage over the other two (JHS completers and graduate of four-year HS) in terms of learning and behavioral skills developed. Likewise, one large BPO company does not distinguish among graduates of college, SHS, and JHS because they provide specialized training to new hires anyway.

A large agribusiness firm requires TESDA NC for its entry level clerk position. Other respondents require OJT and internship which are far beyond the requirements of the work immersion for SHS students. Hotels prefer those with work experience and with skill in OPERA system and require 300-450 hours of OJT for their clerical jobs. A real estate firm would hire an applicant who had 300-700 hours of internship in relevant field. Respondents also look for the following skills and personal traits – trainable, mature and have good communication skills.

Still one small manufacturer said it will hire SHS graduates on a part-time basis only to perform manual encoding on their ledgers.

7.4.2.2. For job positions in the sales sector. One wholesale and retail distributor said that the SHS graduates should have core competence in marketing and customer service, product knowledge, good communication skills and be quick to learn. Hotels are looking for applicants who are confident, computer literate, good in guests-handling and with good communication skills.

7.4.2.3. In the services sector, SHS graduates, according to respondents from hotels and restaurants, should have TESDA certificate and skills on table set-up, proper buzzing, operating kitchen equipment, etc. One microenterprise said that it does not distinguish among graduates of SHS and the old four-year HS and JHS/Grade 10 completers as long as they know their job functions and have multitasking ability. Employers are also looking for individuals who are trainable, persevering, and have good communications and listening skills.

7.4.2.4. For crafts and related trades, several companies (shipping line, wholesale and retail distributor, hospital, LGUs) require TESDA certificates, i.e., NC II. However, one medium-sized electronics company requires 800-900 hours of practicum to qualify for the job while a large agribusiness firm looks for individuals who have gained equivalent to two-year college course with TESDA certificate/NC. While they are open to hiring SHS graduates, they demand qualifications above what the jobs require and what the SHS graduates have. In other companies (i.e., manufacturing sector), SHS graduates have to also compete with graduates of the old four-year HS course who have gained work experience and have worked their way up inside the firms.

Meanwhile, a large shipbuilding company does not differentiate among SHS graduates, JHS/Grade 10 completers, graduates of two-year/vocational courses and those with college level education because all new recruits will have to pass thorough training in the company's training center and earn a special certificate/license. TESDA license is not adequate according to the company's high and internationally acknowledged standards. Thus, applicants must be highly trainable, physically and emotionally fit, and with good communication skills.

A medium-sized agribusiness company said that for simple works like spot welding, it may hire a SHS graduate but high school undergraduate or even an elementary graduate may qualify as long as the individual is trainable.

Other skills and traits mentioned for these types of jobs include being open to learning, mature, responsible, able to deal with people, and can easily understand instructions.

7.4.2.5. For drivers and related jobs, respondents look for applicants with license and prefer those with experience and ability to deal with people.

7.4.2.6. Elementary occupation, as mentioned above, are simple and routine manual tasks most often requiring only physical strength as well as completion of primary education. Some large firms would consider SHS graduates, despite being overqualified, for these positions. A large manufacturing company said it has no choice but to offer these jobs to the SHS graduates because there are no other job positions available in the firm. A large hospitality company does not distinguish between Grade 10/JHS completers and SHS graduates and is open to hire both for park-based attendant jobs. On the other hand, a micro-enterprise with less than 10 workers said that because works under this category are simple and do not require special skills, these do not fit the SHS graduates and it may just accept HS undergraduate or elementary graduate as long as they are computer literate and can deal with customers.

Likewise, LGUs, while hesitant to offer low-level and menial jobs to SHS graduates, have to follow qualifications based on what the CSC-QS provide. A concern brought up by the LGU respondents was the confusion in the interpretation of “high school graduate” as written on the CSC-QS, whether there will be differentiation between graduates of SHS and the old four-year high school curriculum and how the educational level of JHS completers be will be interpreted. This has policy implications on qualifications/requirements imposed by the Civil Service Commission on hiring government employees.

A shipping line has the same predicament as the LGUs. It could not offer sea-based job positions because the functions of these positions and corresponding requirements are regulated by the Philippine Maritime Authority (MARINA). This may also entail a review in the issuance of the Seaman’s Book as a MARINA requirement for sea-based positions.

7.4.2.7. For associate level professionals/technicians, while degree holders are required, a few companies said they can adjust to accommodate SHS graduates. For IT technicians, SHS graduates must be willing to undergo in-depth and longer internship program that fit the needs of the concerned industry. For nursing assistant/technician and OR technician positions in a hospital, the latter is willing to hire SHS graduates, instead of nursing graduate-board passers. As suggested by the respondent, DepEd and other concerned authorities may explore developing a course (with TESDA certificate) which is more advanced than the caregiving course under the TVL track/HE strand to approximate the nursing care course. But this has to pass the requirements set by the Department of Health (DOH).

With regard to salary, firms, in general, give the regional daily minimum wage for entry level positions which also vary by region and sector. Meanwhile, call agents in NCR are offered PHP 15,000-18,000 monthly salary. A large ship building company in Cebu offers PHP9,000 – 10,900 monthly salary for crafts and related trades workers.

Appendices D-F show the type of jobs available and the corresponding qualifications and salaries for each firm/company in NCR, Cebu and Calabarzon who participated in the KII.

7.5. *Adjustments made/to be made in hiring policies*

The discussion on qualifications and competencies surfaced out some hiring policies of the companies/firms. Some prefer college graduates or college level for middle-level skilled jobs. Others do not differentiate SHS graduates from JHS completers and the previous fourth year HS graduates. LGUs are restricted by the qualification standards set by the CSC while shipping lines have to follow MARINA regulations for recruiting sea-based personnel. These hiring policies/practices tend to impede employment of SHS graduates so that adjustments have to be made to help SHS graduates get employed.

Following is a summary of the responses made by the respondents when asked if they are willing to adjust their hiring policies for SHS graduates. Most of the firms interviewed disclosed that they have to discuss yet within their organization the hiring policies for SHS graduates. Some private firms have to consult their mother organizations. Meanwhile, the LGUs will have to follow the qualification standards set by the CSC. Few firms said they are willing to adjust or make some changes in their hiring policies.

7.5.1. *Willing to adjust hiring policies and guidelines*

Retail businesses can adjust their hiring policies for SHS graduates since they have already been giving more weights to skills and attitude that will fit the job rather than educational attainment. For example, they prefer applicants with ability to communicate and deal with people and with ability to thrive in sales.

Other firms will have adjustments in qualifications of their support staff but they are not yet ready to do the same for the technical positions. One hospital was willing to hire SHS graduates for nursing assistant positions whose track/specialization are related to nursing care but more advanced than caregiving. But this has to be accepted and approved by the DOH. Some firms indicated that they will now be specific in posting for vacant positions, i.e., “at least Senior high school graduate” specifying the track/strand choice.

7.5.1.1. Has to follow government qualification standards and regulations (CSC and MARINA). The LGU has no own hiring policies but it follows the qualification standards set by CSC. According to the respondents, positions available for SHS graduates would mostly be first level positions (entry level) falling under Salary Grade (SG) 4 or 5 which require “High School graduates”. There is a need, however, to clarify whether the educational requirement refers to the previous 4-year High School graduate, the SHS graduate or JHS completers. Likewise, there is a need to clear up if the additional 2 years of SHS is considered as equivalent to second year level in college. CSC together with other concerned agencies may have to clarify these matters to prevent confusion among the HR Departments of government.

Per phone inquiry made with the CSC national office, HS refers to both SHS graduates and graduates of the previous four-year HS while JHS completer is considered HS level. Completion of two years in college is not equivalent to SHS graduate as SHS is not considered

part of “collegiate studies”. CSC, together with DepEd, TESDA and CHED may review and adjust educational requirements for first level positions in the civil service to consider the SHS graduates. CSC may also have to conduct information dissemination not only across national government agencies but across all LGUs nationwide.

On the hiring of sea-based workers, the respondent said that it depends on the approval of MARINA. DepEd and MARINA may have to review the requirements on giving licenses to sea-based personnel in consideration of SHS graduates.

7.5.1.2. Has to wait for the results of the pilot hiring. Policy adjustments will be made after the ongoing pilot hiring of SHS graduates in one large BPO firm. Data will be gathered to assess the SHS graduates’ work performance and retention in the company.

7.5.1.3. Has to be discussed yet within the organization. Some firms have not yet discussed this within the organization. Others said they need to consult their top management and/or their legal team. Others said it will depend on the hiring guidelines of their mother company. If the mother company will not implement it yet, they may propose. For now, if SHS graduates apply, they will be placed equal to the graduates of the old four-year HS curriculum. The DepEd and other stakeholders may see these responses of the employers as an opportunity to improve strategies in getting their support for the SHS program.

7.5.2. Trainings and related assistance to make SHS graduates employable

Respondents perceive that the following trainings/assistance will contribute to make SHS graduates employable: providing work immersion experience to SHS students, in-house training for SHS graduates who have been recruited, and making training assistance to the SHS program a part of the firm’s corporate social responsibility (CSR).

7.5.2.1. Entering into an agreement with schools for students’ work immersion. Some firms provide and continue to support work immersion experience to SHS students by entering into an agreement with particular schools. Nine out of the 26 firms interviewed had the experience of handling work immersion for SHS students who are in the Academic track (STEM, HUMMS, ABM) and TVL track (ICT, SMAW). Below is a summary of the initial experiences including insights and suggestions shared by some firms.

Firm 1 (Real estate): TVL, Drafting and design

Three students from a public school in NCR, who chose the TVL track specializing in drafting and design, applied for work immersion in the company. The students had the actual experience of using auto computer-aided design (CAD) and other computer software in making technical designs and illustrations. The respondent perceives that the school requirement of 120 hours is not enough for in-depth exposure of students to skills application and to build traits like patience, maturity, and confidence in doing work. The respondent suggested that the duration of immersion be extended to 300-700 hours or two to six months. Also, the company benefited from the immersion experience as it became a training opportunity for some of its personnel on how to do mentoring.

Firm 2 (Manufacturing): Academic track, ABM strand

This firm in Calabarzon accepted 30 SHS students aged 17-22 years old with ABM strand choice from one school. They arranged five students per batch where each batch ran for about one week. It was emphasized that having few students per batch aimed to prevent disruption in the production line and also to give space and time for the SHS students to learn. They were rotated in the different sections i.e., production line in coffee processing, simple bookkeeping like manual encoding in ledgers, and preparing and serving coffee drinks (as assistant to the barista) in the firm's small coffee shop. The respondent said that the immersion provided learnings that will help them prepare in doing business and will make them realize and appreciate the value of work – that they have to work hard to be able to run a business. They also learned the do's and don'ts of applying for work. Selected workers in the firm observed performance of SHS students and corrected them on the spot. Towards the end of the immersion, SHS students were interviewed. Students were then assigned in other firms like the Water District office and the LGU office, to complete the minimum immersion duration of two weeks.

Firm 3 (Furniture-making company): Academic track, ABM strand

The firm had an agreement with a private school to provide 80 hours of immersion in bookkeeping to one SHS student in the academic track. They required the student to make calendar notes of what she did and what she learned. After the work immersion, they gave certificate of completion. The school sent a three-paged form for the firm to assess work and behavioral skills related to the student's specialization. The conduct of the immersion was through a special request only and the firm is still uncertain about accepting applicants in the future. A national high school in the area attempted to engage them in providing exposure to Grade 12 students in carpentry works. But the firm did not accept due to safety concerns. The presence of carpentry machines in the production area may cause accidents and jeopardize the safety of the students. If the company has prepared a training program for SHS students, then they are willing to accept students maybe in the furniture design department. Their action will be in cooperation with a specific economic zone which also involves other locators. The firm plans to train new young labor entrants as most of their workers are getting old and will soon be retirees. They noted, however, that the current generation do not prefer this kind of industry.

Firm 4 (Shipping line): TVL track, specialization in Maritime

The firm provided immersion to 100 SHS students specializing in maritime from one school. Students joined two inter-island voyages where each complete voyage (to and from) ran for about 18 to 20 hours. In that length, the exposure was too limited and it will most likely be just familiarization, without any hands-on training. At the same time, the respondent noted how the limited work immersion hours becomes a consideration for company policies on confidentiality. It was not clear why the students only joined two voyages as the respondent did not see the MOA between the school and their company. According to the respondent, they have not received feedback from the university after that.

Firm 5 (Hospital): Academic track, ABM strand

Thirty-seven (37) SHS students under the ABM strand from four schools in Calabarzon had work immersion last April 2018. The immersion ran for two weeks (80 hours) in various sections of the hospital such as accounting, HR, nursing service, and registration. Due to the short period of time allotted, deployment of each student was limited in one section and there was no rotation of work assignments. There was less time to supervise and monitor the students because the employees were busy with their own work. The respondent suggested longer immersion, i.e., 1-2 months, for students to absorb more learnings. Under signed agreement

with schools, the firm is willing to continue providing opportunity for work immersion to SHS students. The firm is open to expand to other tracks.

Firm 6 (Theme park): TVL track, Home economics strand specializing in Tourism and Academic track, HUMMS and ABM strands

Around 130 students with academic (HUMMS and ABM) and predominantly TVL (Home Economics-tourism) track choices had work immersion from November 2017 to March 2018 in three batches. The firm views this endeavor as part of their corporate social responsibility. Fresh from attending the SHS Work Immersion Forum organized by the DepEd in partnership with the industries in 2017, the firm prepared a training plan to systematize the conduct of its work immersion. Track choices and specialization were aligned with assigned units: a) students in the tourism strand were park-based; b) those in the ABM strand were assigned in corporate planning and office work, and c) those in the HUMMS strand were tasked to interact with children guests. Students were oriented before they were deployed to their respective assignments to avoid culture shock, i.e., on how to greet the guests, what to deliver. Due to the limited time of 80 hours, they were only confined in one section and did not have the chance to go around the different sections of the company. Duration of immersion was only one and a half months and students reported two to three times a week. Schedule was only from 9am to 4pm. They also asked parents' consent if there were events that would require them to stay beyond 4:00 pm. The firm shouldered the cost of T-shirts for the immersion graduation.

During the immersion, the firm noted that some students lack written and verbal communication skills while others have behavioral problems, i.e., "hindi maayos makipag-usap". But there were also some positive traits observed. Some are enthusiastic in dealing with people while some are good in sales as they were able to sell annual passes. They realized there are interesting work opportunities inside the theme park and some expressed interest to work in the firm after graduation while waiting for college classes in August.

Other firms

In the LGU offices in NCR, there are situations where students were assigned to various departments without consideration of the students' chosen track/strand and specialization. This happened because there were too many students, especially from public high schools, to accommodate at one time.

One hotel in Cebu enforces a 450-hour minimum requirement for "OJTs" and usually SHS students back out. The respondent believes that this requirement is essential for the employers especially if the students will be considered in the short listing of job applicants in the future. With the current work immersion of only 80 - 120 hours, the respondent hoped for its extension to allow more time for the students to apply and test their skills and lengthen their exposure in the industry. From the respondent's understanding, the students may already have an idea about the industry but it is still not a strong foundation for them to be prepared for employment.

Firms suggested that immersion must show the complete cycle of work enabling the students to learn all the aspects of work from top to bottom. For students whose track choice is food and beverage (F&B)-related, the curriculum must enable students to learn more about food etiquette, courtesy, and how to interact with people as well as finetune their skills on the proper table setting, and serving of food and drinks to the guests. The immersion must also emphasize the value of time management in carrying out the different activities of work.

7.5.2.2. In-house training for recruits. Some firms provide experiential (not classroom) type of training programs to recruits, i.e., personality development, core values, confidence-building. In other firms, newly hired employees are trained on specific tasks before placed in specific assignments, i.e., front office and guest assistance, telephone operation, housekeeping (how to use cleaning chemicals, doing the laundry). Large firms have designated units which give formal or informal training while micro and small establishments provide mostly informal training (showing how to do things and pointing out errors on the spot).

7.5.2.3. Long-term training programs as part of the firms' corporate social responsibility. Several firms were willing to partner with the government in providing in-depth apprenticeship program for SHS, i.e., on customer care, sales and marketing. In this case, there is an opportunity for the company to gauge the capacity of the students and later on, find jobs/positions for them. It is important for the SHS program planners/developers to consult and involve the industries.

Few firms said they have no training programs for SHS graduates but expressed interest in including trainings for SHS students as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR), focusing on long-term programs to help develop the potentials of the SHS students.

7.6. SHS graduates who applied and were hired

Majority of the firms (18 out of 26) interviewed have not yet received job applications from SHS graduates. Graduates were not applying because of the following reasons: firms have no vacant positions in the first place, SHS graduates, regardless of tracks, wanted to go to college first, SHS graduates were hesitant to apply because they felt they are not yet prepared to work, and graduates have no confidence to compete with college graduate applicants.

For firms who have received job applications, they related that SHS graduates apply for jobs for financial reason, i.e., graduate needs to help augment family income. Others are no longer interested to continue schooling because they think they are already old to go to college (for 21 to 22 year-old graduates).

Of the few companies (8 out of 26) that received applications, two did not hire the SHS graduates. One company preferred college and vocational graduates over SHS-TVL graduates for CAD operator positions while the other establishment had no vacancies. The remaining six firms that hired SHS graduates were from the BPO, manufacturing, shopping center management, and hospitality (theme park, resort, and restaurant) sectors (Table 15).

It was noted that SHS graduates were hired mostly as elementary occupation workers (warehouse helpers, leisure and entertainment center attendants, ground cleaner/maintenance man, park-based and guest service attendants, and picker). Others were placed as clerical support workers (call agent, encoding clerks, receptionist), crafts and related trades workers (production operators), and sales and services workers (call center sales person).

Matching of jobs with chosen track/strand were observed, i.e., those in home economics track as waiters, or those in tourism track as guest service attendants. Although there were graduates

in the TVL-electronics track hired as ground cleaners/maintenance. There were also JHS completers who competed with SHS graduate applicants and were hired as park-based attendants in a theme park.

An electronics manufacturing company in Cebu absorbed SHS graduates who have undergone a special (five-month) apprenticeship in their firm. They were hired as encoding clerks, direct operators (crafts and trades), and warehouse helpers.

Most of the firms give the regional minimum wage. A BPO company offers PhP 15,000 to 18,000 for call agents at entry level. Few small establishments provide free meals.

Table 15. Number of SHS graduates who applied and were hired by firms

Positions applied for by SHS graduates	Number who applied	Number who were hired	Salary given (PHP)
NCR (9 firms)			
<i>BPO (1)</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerical support, and sales and services (Voice and chat agents) 	< 100 Competed with college graduates & Grade 10 completers; those with call center experience fare better regardless of educational attainment	10	15,000-18,000/month
8 firms	none	n/a	n/a
Cebu (9 firms)			
<i>Manufacturing, electronics (1)</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerical support (encoding clerks) Crafts & related trades (direct operators) Elementary occupation (warehouse helpers) 	Did not apply; absorbed & hired after a special five month apprenticeship with firm	20	Regional minimum wage
<i>Shopping center management corporation (1)</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary occupation (leisure and entertainment center attendants) 	10	1 2 were offered jobs but only 1 accepted	Regional minimum wage
<i>Manufacturing (furniture) (1)</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technician/associate professional (CAD operators) 	TVL: 10	None college and vocational graduates were hired	
6 firms	None	n/a	n/a
Calabarzon (8 firms)			
<i>Resort (1)</i>			

Positions applied for by SHS graduates	Number who applied	Number who were hired	Salary given (PHP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerical support (receptionist) 	IT: 1 ABM:1	1 already left the firm to look for IT-related work elsewhere 1 was accepted but did not proceed; preferred to work in Manila	Regional minimum wage of P300 plus free lunch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services (waiters) 	Food & beverage: 4	4 worked only for 1 ½ months to gain experience & then left to apply to other companies	Regional minimum wage of 300 plus free lunch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary occupation (ground cleaners/ maintenance) 	Electronics: 10	10 worked for 1 ½ to 2 months only and then left the firm to continue college	Regional minimum wage of P300 plus free lunch
<i>Restaurant (1)</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary occupation (Maintenance) 	1	Not hired because no vacancy	
<i>Theme Park (1)</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary occupation (guest service attendants) 	Tourism: 5	5 Worked from April to July 2018 while waiting for start of college classes in August; intend to pursue college)	Minimum wage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary occupation (park-based attendants) 	JHS completers: <10	<10 Will not continue schooling because families lack money	
<i>Manufacturing (1)</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary occupation (picker) 	30	10 There were limited number of vacant positions; firm did not accept those who just wanted to save money for college; firm needs people who will stay	Minimum wage
4 firms	None	n/a	n/a

One company in NCR is currently piloting the hiring of SHS graduates. Out of the less than a hundred SHS graduates who have applied and competed with college graduates, ten percent were hired. Accepted applicants have not started working yet (as of the time of the interview), as they will have to undergo training first with pay. They will be on standard probationary period for six months and their performance will be evaluated on their fifth month. One concern of the firm though, is that some of them may opt to resign to study in college. This is the reason why the firm will gather data and observe the trend in performance and work retention of SHS graduates. Results of the pilot, expected by the first quarter of 2019, will be used as basis of hiring policies for SHS graduates.

The issue on work retention was also brought up by other firms who have experienced hiring SHS graduates. They observed that most of the hired SHS graduates worked only for a short period of time, from one and a half months up to four months. Most of them proceeded to college while a few just gained experience and hopped to other companies for higher compensation. One large company from the hospitality sector shared that SHS graduates are quick to decide to leave the job without formal resignation and most likely to go on absence without leave (AWOL). They have a tendency for company hopping as they wanted to have high salary instantly. For the firm, this is a waste of time and resources spent in recruitment (e.g. screening, medical expenses, processing of documents), orientation, and training. The firm suggested that work ethics, values, and related concerns be emphasized in the SHS curriculum.

7.7. General comments on work-readiness of SHS graduates

When asked if SHS graduates are work-ready, there were more firms that said SHS graduates are not yet ready. A few said graduates are work-ready while others still need to gather data to gauge work readiness of the graduates.

7.7.1. Not work-ready

More firms perceive SHS graduates as not work-ready. They raised concerns on the inadequate technical and behavioral skills of SHS graduates as well as lack of length and quality of work immersion. These comments were consistent with the preconditions they cited for hiring SHS graduates in Section 7.3.1.

In spite of the work immersion completion, students still lack work skills. With regard to behavior, students were playful at work and were often caught using their cellphones. There is still a need to work on the values of the students. Because of their young age (mostly 17 -18 years old), they lack maturity and perseverance in performing work. Most of them are not yet assertive. Since they are still young, they might not be able to withstand the working conditions, i.e., in manufacturing companies.

The work immersion hours (80 hours) they completed is not enough. It is just an observation phase especially in the LGU offices where there was not much work assigned to them aside from filing and encoding.

7.7.2. Yes, work-ready

Only few firms gave favorable responses. They said that millennials are technology savvy and can easily pace with the latest trends and innovations. One firm in wholesale and retail distribution articulated that there are markets for SHS graduates not only locally but outside the country. They are not less competent and they are not “second class citizens”. In general, this is a trial and error period and there are still areas for improvement.

In Calabarzon, micro business establishments interviewed articulated that SHS graduates are work-ready for jobs that require simple routine skills such as cleaning, waiting, etc. Manufacturing companies thought that SHS graduates are work-ready but only for positions in the production line and selected clerical positions. Two firms expressed that they have workers who are elementary graduates only, so that hiring SHS graduates is much better. But it is such a waste of resources to hire SHS graduates only to become cleaners or laborer.

Others said that graduates are work-ready if the track/specialization they followed matches the type of jobs available. Those who had TVL or academic-ABM track are work ready if they obtained NC II from TESDA.

7.7.3. Do not know yet

Some firms said that it is too early to assess if the graduates are work-ready since we have just produced the first batch. The firms have yet to participate in the work immersion program and be exposed to the K12 program and students. They have no benchmark data yet as to the level of ability and performance of K12 graduates particularly during work immersion.

8. Summary and Recommendations

8.1. Summary

The enactment of RA 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education of Act of 2013 added two years to basic education. One of the rationales offered by proponents of the law is that Senior High School (SHS) graduates can work or engage in entrepreneurial activities if they choose to do so. This study assesses the likelihood of achieving this objective of the program by examining the experience of grade 12 graduating students and the views of firms about the labor market prospects of the SHS graduates. It does this by (i) looking into the SHS curriculum and the competencies developed, (ii) identifying the types of jobs that fit the Grade 12 graduates, (iii) gathering the private sector perspective on the jobs available and appropriate for the Grade 12 graduates, and (iv) providing policy recommendations for the improvement of the SHS curriculum.

Based on the enrollment data for SY2017-18, there are 11,087 schools offering SHS 58% of which are public. There are 2.7 million SHS students 1.2 million of which are grade 12 students. This level of enrollment was more than what was expected. None of the schools offer all the 8 strands and majority offer only 1 strand. The shortage would likely be more on the number of strand offerings rather than the number of schools. The most popular among the 8 strand is GAS closely followed by TVL. There are more female compared to male SHS students

depicting the well-known phenomenon in the Philippines that on average male students drop out of school earlier than female students.

The FGDs with grade 12 students were conducted in 18 schools in NCR, Region III and Region IV-A 12 of which are public. The profile of the grade 12 respondents reveals that most of the students are 18 students and majority (61%) are female. It also confirms that most of the students are planning to go to college even for those in the TVL track. The FGDs reveal that majority of the students intends to proceed to college including those in the TVL track. In fact, most revealed will apply or have already applied for college. The results reveal that school and track selection are based on either (a) convenience, (b) personal preferences, (c) affordability or by parents. The students expressed appreciation to the additional two years for providing them the opportunity to assess what courses to take up in college, help improve their character/attitude and equip them with additional knowledge and skills for fields they want to specialize in. Their appreciation was found to be largely dependent on the quality of teaching, the relevance of the subjects taught, and the learning resources and facilities available. The students revealed that they are not very confident that they will get a job after SHS. Even for those who gained national certification for the TVL strand, they feel that companies would still prefer to hire college graduates. Most of them expect minimum wage salary if they get hired.

The KIIs were conducted with 33 human resource managers/officers from 26 firms in NCR, Calabarzon and Cebu. The types of firms who participated span the services, manufacturing, agribusiness sectors, and local government units. It also covers large, medium, small and micro enterprises.

The highlights of the KIIs revealed that the firms interviewed lack in-depth knowledge of the SHS program. They know bits and pieces of information about the program however, the knowledge they have about the SHS curriculum and the profile/quality of its first batch of graduates are not adequate enough. Firms articulated that they must be exposed to the graduates to know them better, i.e., what are the knowledge the graduates have acquired, what are the skills they have developed, and whether the skills they have developed are adequate and appropriate for the current needs of the industry.

There is reluctance among most of the respondent firms to hire SHS graduates. While most of them said they are willing to hire, they gave preconditions for hiring such as required competencies and specialized skills, longer and more in-depth work immersion, and giving only low positions in their company. These preconditions are congruent with the reasons (SHS graduates are not qualified, SH lack work experience) cited by the JobStreet survey report on unwillingness of firms to hire SHS graduates. The reluctance to hire may also be linked to the lack of the firms' in-depth knowledge of the SHS program. Further, more firms perceive SHS graduates as not work ready validating the PCCI's concern that the first batch of SHS graduates might not still be ready to work in a professional workplace. Firms' perception on work readiness of SHS graduates may contribute to the former's reluctance to hire the graduates.

The type of jobs available for SHS graduates are mostly entry level positions requiring middle level skills such as clerical support staff, crafts and trade workers, machine operators, and sales and services workers. But many employers offer elementary occupations that only require completion of primary education and skills below the middle level skills. The discussion on qualifications and competencies surfaced out some hiring policies of the companies/firms. Some firms prefer college graduates or college level for middle-level skilled jobs. Others do

not differentiate SHS graduates from JHS completers and the previous fourth year HS graduates putting SHS graduates on equal footing and having no comparative advantage over the other two (JHS completers and graduate of four-year HS) in terms of learning and behavioral skills developed. LGUs, restricted by the qualification standards set by the CSC, give some low-level and menial jobs to SHS graduates. LGUs also brought up concerns about the interpretation of “high school graduate” as written on the CSC-QS and how the educational level of JHS completers be will be interpreted. This has policy implications on qualifications/requirements imposed by the Civil Service Commission on hiring government employees. Likewise, shipping lines have to follow MARINA regulations for recruiting sea-based personnel. Other firms require OJT and internship which are far beyond the requirements of the work immersion for SHS students. These hiring policies/practices tend to impede employment of SHS graduates and adjustments have to be made to help SHS graduates get employed.

It was noted that few companies offer SHS graduates the associate level professionals/technicians positions such as IT technicians, nursing assistants and operating room technicians. While degree holders are required, these few companies are willing to adjust hiring policies to accommodate SHS graduates, i.e., requiring in-depth and longer internship program for IT technicians and exploring the development of a course (with TESDA certificate) for nursing care which is more advanced than the caregiving course under the TVL track/HE strand.

Firms shared their experiences and insights on the conduct of work immersion. Most of them perceive that the minimum school requirement of 80 hours is not enough, i.e. for in-depth exposure of TVL students to skills application, and in honing behavioral skills/traits, i.e., patience, maturity, and confidence in doing work. The exposure was too limited and it will most likely be just familiarization. There was less time for firms to supervise and monitor the students because the employees were busy with their own work. Most respondents likened immersion to OJTs and internships of college students. Some private firms emphasized having few students per batch to prevent disruption in operations/production and allow space and time for the SHS students to learn. LGUs, however have contrary situations where there were too many students, especially from public schools, to accommodate at one time resulting to deployment to various LGU departments without consideration of the students’ chosen track/strand and specialization. The issue on exposure and hands-on training in the maritime industry vis-à-vis safety of minors and disclosure of confidential information surfaced out in providing immersion experience for TVL-maritime students. One firm raised the challenge for the young generation to take interest in furniture making because current workers are getting old. With the current work immersion hours, firms hope for its extension to allow more time for the students to apply and test their skills and lengthen their exposure in the industry.

Firms confirmed the information gathered from the literature review, that there are only very few companies hiring SHS graduates. They reasoned out that SHS graduates were not applying for jobs because of the following reasons: firms have no vacant positions in the first place, SHS graduates (regardless of tracks) wanted to go to college first, SHS graduates were hesitant to apply because they felt they are not yet prepared to work, and graduates have no confidence to compete with college graduate applicants. The KII results added that SHS graduates were hired mostly as elementary occupation workers (warehouse helpers, leisure and entertainment center attendants, ground cleaner/maintenance man, park-based and guest service attendants, and picker). Some firms said this is because they have no vacancies and the only positions available are those under the elementary occupations. It could also be possible that because there is

reluctance in hiring, only the lower positions are offered. It was also validated that SHS graduates were hired as call agents by BPO companies.

The issue on work retention surfaced out from the firms' experience in hiring SHS graduates. Most firms who have hired SHS graduates noticed the later's tendency to work only for a short period of time either because they will proceed to college or they just wanted to gain experience and hope to transfer to higher paying companies. According to the respondents, this is a waste of time and resources spent in recruitment, orientation, and training. This is the reason why one large company is piloting the hiring of SHS graduates to gather data on the graduates' work performance and retention, the results of which will serve as basis for adjustments in hiring policies.

8.2. Recommendations

While it may be too early to be gauging the performance of the SHS program particularly the performance of the its graduates in the labor market, the study has uncovered areas for improving the implementation of the program focusing on this objective. Based on results of the FGDs with grade 12 students and the KIIs with human resources managers/officers of firms as well as the review of the literature and secondary data, the following recommendations are put forward.

Improve quality and standardization of teaching SHS subjects. It has been observed that due to lack of needed resources, the quality of teaching high school subjects is dependent on the ability and initiative of teachers to find needed learning materials. It is noted that the students' extent of appreciation of the program are dependent on the quality of teaching, the relevance of subject taught, and the learning resources and facilities available. This highlights the importance of continuously improving the quality and standardization of teaching in SHS. This may have been part of birth pains of the program, but this should not be allowed to extend beyond the initial years of implementation. Even highly able teachers will eventually be hampered by lack of needed teaching materials.

Highlight the longer-term importance and better teaching of the core course. Perhaps because of the novelty of the opportunity of tracking students to specializations which is at the heart of the SHS implementation and because core courses have been taught in junior high school, students tended to dismiss the core courses as unnecessary and a mere repetition of junior high school topics. This may have been the result of asking junior high school teachers to teach in senior high school or lack of information of what has already been taught in junior high school for new SHS teachers. Given this, there a need to demonstrate progression in knowledge taught in SHS from that of JHS. It must be realized that, by design, the general education subjects in higher education are supposed to be taught in SHS. The core courses in SHS much be used to deepen knowledge in these areas. Deepening knowledge in the core courses are essential for higher education, flexibility and trainability given the rapid changes in the workplace with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Culaba et al., 2018).

Improve arrangements for taking NC assessments. National Certification assessments are important for certifying the skills SHS graduates possess. Despite the current problems with acceptability of NCs to firms (Orbeta and Esguerra, 2017), the employment and entrepreneurship objectives of the program dictates that taking NC assessments should be given

a priority. The current practice of encouraging only TVL students to take NC assessments should be re-examined as those in the academic tracks may also be eligible for appropriate NC assessments, e.g. bookkeeping for those in the ABM track. This also includes the taking of Civil Service Sub-professional examinations. At the very least the school should make part of their mandate to arrange for the taking of the NC exams for their students. Given that the assessment fees may be prohibitive to poor students, a subsidy for them may be budgeted by the program.

Step up and sustain information campaign and other awareness-raising activities among employers to be able to convince firms to support the SHS program, i.e., participate in work immersion program and support hiring of SHS graduates. Firms, particularly its HR officers in charge of hiring, need to be oriented on the basics of the SHS program, its objectives, the curriculum exits, various tracks and specializations, the 21st century skills that will be developed, the work immersion program, and the certificates that will be obtained. Based on the results of the KII, HR officers wanted to know the knowledge and skills that the SHS graduates will develop to match these with the needs of their industries.

The SHS Work Immersion Forum held in Ortigas last September 2017 attended by the government and various industries (as shared by one of the respondents) may be continued/sustained to help government convince the employers to provide work immersion experience to SHS learners. Companies have to be enlightened on the purpose of the immersion, their roles as partner institution, and the various delivery models that may be used depending on the learners' needs. A big challenge is how to convince the employers on the adequacy of the duration of the work immersion and how (with the perceived limited hours) students' skills may be applied and tested.

Continuing activities after the Forum and orientation are important like sharing of experiences and learnings during the initial implementation of the program, i.e., improving the design and content of work immersion delivery models that would address the needs of their industry; handling of work immersion program; and adjustments in hiring policies for K-to-12 graduates. Venues for regular discussion and sharing could be the Annual Locators' Forum and the regular meetings of the Regional People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) meetings.

Ensure that deployment of students in work immersion venues is according to their track/specialization choice. This is vital especially in LGU offices where too many SHS students are deployed and just to comply with the immersion requirements, students were accommodated in departments not relevant to their track/specialization. Government and schools must continuously monitor, supervise, and work with participating firms in the preparation of their training and deployment plan for work immersion. Employers must designate their training coordinator/supervisor who will oversee the execution of immersion within the company. The bigger challenge is for government and concerned stakeholders to come up with innovative strategies to motivate more employers to participate in work immersion in order to have more immersion venues.

Have longer and competency-oriented work immersion. To be work-ready, firms suggested that the duration of work immersion be longer than 80 hours. The recommended numbers vary depending on the industry, i.e., 300 to 700 hours for hotels. Regardless of the numbers, firms suggested that the immersion must show the complete cycle of work enabling the students to

learn all the aspects of work from top to bottom. The numbers are arbitrary and it must be complemented by quality actual activities. The problem seen is how to make companies give 200 hours or more for immersion. In a pilot testing done by the PCCI of the dual training system in home economics and hospitality strands, what was done is to integrate applied subjects into work immersion. Also, the work immersion program was prepared in coordination with the industries, i.e., association of employers in the locality.

Review and update curriculum content including immersion delivery models. Following are some suggested courses which emanated from the main discussion of the report:

- i. One hospital said they are open to hire SHS graduates as nursing assistants whose specialization is nursing care, a more advance course than caregiving under the Home Economics strand. But this must be approved by the DOH.
- ii. Hotels suggested the inclusion of the food and beverage services course, i.e., food etiquette, courtesy in serving food and drinks to guests, how to deal with guests, proper table setting.
- iii. The curriculum must give importance on the development of behavioral skills and personal traits such as appreciation of the value of time management in performing work, do's and don't's of applying for work, and developing multi-tasking ability.
- iv. Firms who had experienced hiring SHS graduates shared that the graduates are quick to decide to leave the job without formal resignation and most likely to go on absence without leave (AWOL). They tend to company hop in the hope of finding high paying jobs. Development of work ethics and work values must be emphasized in the SHS curriculum as this is linked to work retention, a vital factor aside from work performance now being considered by the employers in hiring SHS graduates.
- v. The development of the immersion delivery model for TVL-maritime students must take into consideration the aim of providing hands-on training/completing immersion hours vis-à-vis safety of minors (i.e., boarding ships and joining voyages which entails long straight hours) and disclosure of confidential information in the maritime industry.
- vi. One firm raised the challenge to develop courses that will get the interest of SHS students to specialize in furniture design/making because current workers are getting old.

Review and adjust hiring policies of government. The CSC may consider the review of government job positions which require high school graduates, i.e., salary grade level 6 and below. The meaning of "high school graduate", as contained in the qualifications standards has to be clarified. The CSC QS may need to differentiate among SHS graduates, JHS completers, and the old four-year high school graduates and study how to put premium on SHS graduates, whose QS was raised because of the additional 2 years of learning and work exposure. Likewise, the MARINA regulations governing the recruitment and licensing of sea-based workers must be reviewed to allow the hiring of SHS graduates. All national government agencies and LGU offices must be informed nationwide about the adjustments in policies.

Encourage online jobsites to be SHS graduates-friendly. The PhilJobnet, the Philippine government's official online jobsite operated by the DOLE, must update its online system to differentiate SHS graduates from the JHS completers and graduates of the four-year HS course. JobStreet and other similar online jobsites may also be encouraged to do the same.

Review objectives and strategies of the SHS program in relation to employment and work retention. Work performance and work retention are factors that influence the decision of employers to hire SHS graduates. As mentioned in the findings, one company did pilot hiring of SHS graduates to gather data on work performance and retention that will be their basis for adjusting hiring policies. Meanwhile, other firms observed that most of the SHS graduates they hired did not stay long. This is because most of them, regardless of track, proceeded to college. If work retention will be an issue because graduates would go to college anyway, then employers may be discouraged to hire them. Apparently, there is inconsistency in convincing employers to hire SHS graduates when there is a problem on work retention should hired SHS graduates opted to go to college. There is a need to review the options for curriculum exits for students in the TVL track, whether to allow them to have both options of preparing for college or preparing for employment or letting them focus on preparing for employment. Employers may opt not to hire SHS graduates in the long run if there will be issues on work retention.

Related to this, one respondent recommended to focus on the disadvantaged students. To quote the respondent, “the TVL track must be separated from the rest of the tracks. And since most of the disadvantaged students are on the TVL track, tuition and other fees should be free. The objective is to make TVL-track takers job-ready rather than go to college/university. Later on, they can go to college part-time while working. The process of separating the TVL may be done fast through the signing of an Executive Order.”

Some firms said that it is too early to assess if the graduates are work-ready since we have just produced the first batch. Many firms have yet to participate in the work immersion program and be exposed to the SHS program and students. They have no benchmark data yet as to the level of ability and performance of K12 graduates particularly during work immersion.

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10. APPENDICES

Appendix A. Sample entry level position entries from the Job Portal of the Civil Service Commission, October 20, 2018 (72,000 job entries)

Position title	Salary grade	Eligibility	Education	Work exp	Trg	Competency
Data controller I	SG6 P10,388.00	CS subprof; data encoder	Finished 2 nd year college or HS graduate w/relevant trade course	none	none	None
Computer operator I	SG7 P15,254.00	CS sub-prof	Finished 2 nd Yr college or HS grad w/relevant voc course	none		No entry
Communications eqpt operator	SG6 P14,340.00	MC 10	Finished 2 nd yr college or HS grad w/relevant voc course	none		No entry
Secretary I	SG7 P15,254.00	CS subprof	Finished 2 nd year college	none		No entry
Accounting Clerk I	SG4 P12,040.00	CS subprof	Finished 2 nd yr college	none	none	None
Cash clerk I	SG4 P10,773.00 to 11,403.00	CS prof; 2 nd level elig	Finished 2 nd year college	None	none	No entry
Clerk I	SG3 P11,914.00	CS subprof; 1 st level elig	Finished 2 nd year college	None	none	n/a
Revenue collection clerk I	SG5 P12,133.00	CS sub-prof	Finished 2 nd year college	None		No entry
Social Welfare Aide	SG4 P10,773.00	None (MC 11)	High school graduate	none	None	No entry
Water meter reader I	SG4 P11,407.00	None MC 11	HS graduate	none		No entry
Market ticket checker	SG3 P10,723.00	None MC 11	HS graduate	None		No entry
Buyer I	SG4 P12,674.00	CS sub-prof	Finished 2 nd year college	none		n/a
Tourism operations asst	SG7 P13,729.00	CS sub-prof	Finished 2 nd year college	none		n/a
Tribal affairs asst	SG5 P13,481.00	MC 11, Cat II	HS graduate	none		No entry
Draftsman I	SG6 P12,906.00	Draftsman MC10	Finished 2 nd year college or HS grad w/relevant voc course	none		n/a
Agriculture Technician	SG6 P12,906.00	CS Sub-prof	Finished 2 nd year college	none		n/a
Bookbinder I	SG2 P9,520.00	None	Elem graduate	none		Office technology
Bookbinder II	SG4 P9,116.00	None	Elem graduate	none		n/a
Farm foreman	SG6 P12,189.00	None	HS graduate	none		No entry
Farm worker I	SG2 P10,640.00	None	Elem graduate	none		n/a

Driver II	SG4 P12,674.00	MC 10; Prof Drivers license	Elem grad	none	none	n/a
Driver I	SG3 P11,318.00	Prof drivers license	Elem graduate	none		n/a
Machinist II	SG6 P14,340.00	MC 11	HS graduate or completion of voc/trade course	none		n/a
Engineering Aide B	SG4 P12,674.00	None; MC 11	HS graduate or completion of voc/trade course	none	none	n/a
Heavy equipment operator	SG6 P12,189.00		HS graduate or voc trade course grad	none		No entry
Watchman	SG2 P9,520.00	None	Elem graduate	none		No entry
Utility worker	SG1	None	Able to read and write	none		No entry
Plumber	SG5	Plumber- MC 10	Elem graduate	none	none	n/a

Appendix B. Available Jobs in JobStreet for SHS Graduates

Firm	Position	Qualification	Salary
1 Concentrix/Convergys Calabarzon, mimaropa, NCR Call center/BPO >5,000 employees	Customer service representative	SHS graduate/completed at least 2 yrs in college; fresh graduates may apply; HS graduate; excellent English communication skills; 18 yrs old and above	
2 Teletech Novaliches Call center/BPO >5,000 employees	Customer service associate	At least 2 yrs of college or graduated SHS; excellent English Communication skills	
3 [24]7 ai megamall Call center/BPO 2,000 – 5,000 employees	Customer service rep	18 yrs old and above; HS graduate with 6 months call center experience; SHS graduate or 2 years in college w/o call center experience; excellent conversational skills; good problem solving and analytical skills	
4 Intelenet Taguig Call center/BPO >5,000 employees	Customer service rep	18 yrs old and above; open to SHS graduate; HS graduate, college undergraduate/graduate; conversant in English	
5 MDS Computer/Information Technology (software) <50 employees	CAD operator	SHS graduate, vocational course graduate; basic knowledge on technical drawings; proficient in MS office applications	
6 Aces call center jobs Call center/BPO >5,000 employees	Senior customer relationship officers ; Senior Customer service reps Senior customer service specialist	HS graduates; college undergraduates; college graduates; with or w/o call center experience; fresh graduates may apply; web navigation and computer literate;	13k to 23k basic salary; plus allowance (1-5k), performance incentives & night shift differentials
7 Global Headstart Human resource management/consulting 1-50	Transaction processing analyst	HS graduate; fluent in English and Mandarin	
8 The Results companies Call center/BPO >5,000 employees	Customer service reps 100 slots	HS/Vocational diploma; short course certificate; college graduate; no work experience required	
9 Springboard HR management /consulting/recruitment firm 500-1000	Customer service rep for a BPO company	At least SHS graduate or completed 2 years in college; no work experience required; social media savvy	
10 VCC Link Recruitment Agency	250 Customer Service rep	HS (previous curriculum) and SHS graduates; 2 nd yr College level and graduates; English communication skills; computer navigation skills	

Appendix C. Guide Questions for FGDs with Students

FGD (GRADE 12 STUDENTS) SUMMARY DOCUMENTATION

Areas of Discussion/Questions	Main Points (Include actual quotations when appropriate)
Discussion Point 1: What was/were the reason/s of SHS students in choosing this school for their SHS studies and the choice of tracks and strand that they are enrolled at or will be graduating from?	
1. <i>Why did you choose this school?</i>	
2. <i>Did you want to go to another school instead of this one or was this your school of first choice?</i>	
3. <i>Why did you choose your track and strand?</i>	
4. <i>Who or what helped you make the decision to choose the track or strand that you have selected?</i>	
Discussion Point 2: How would they assess their experience with SHS in terms of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Their expectations about the subjects they are about to take; b. The skills that they have learned from these subjects; c. The extent to which the knowledge and skills have prepared them for work or business? 	
1. <i>How did you find the subjects that you have taken in SHS? Do you think they were too easy or too difficult or just right? How/ Why?</i>	
2. <i>Which of the subjects in SHS did you like / enjoy the most? Why?</i>	
3. <i>Which of the subjects in SHS did you think you excelled at?</i>	
4. <i>Which of the subjects in SHS do you think will be most useful for you (in terms of real life applications, or for employment purposes or business purposes?)</i>	
5. <i>Can you think of any particular skill or competency that you think will help you get a job?</i>	
6. <i>Are there any subjects which you think were just a waste of time or would not be useful for your future job choices?</i>	
Discussion Point 3: What are their thoughts about the prospects of finding employment or being employed after SHS?	
1. <i>Do you think you will easily get a job after SHS?</i>	
2. <i>What kinds of jobs do you think you will get, if you intend to go employment hunting after graduation?</i>	
3. <i>How much starting salary do you expect to get if you get hired after SHS? Would you be willing to take this salary?</i>	
4. <i>Have you started applying for available jobs? Where? What kinds of jobs did you apply for?</i>	
5. <i>If you haven't thought of getting a job just yet, would there be a starting salary that would entice you to skip college for the moment and just go to work instead? How much might this be?</i>	
6. <i>For TVL students, any NCs they have (a) taken, (b) acquired/passed.</i>	
7. <i>What do you think will possible employers look for (skills, credentials etc.) from job applicants at</i>	

Areas of Discussion/Questions	Main Points (Include actual quotations when appropriate)
<i>present? Why do you think these are important for employers?</i>	
8. <i>Do you think you have these skills / credentials? Why or why not?</i>	
9. <i>How long are you willing to wait with your application before getting a job?</i>	
10. <i>On the other hand, if you want to get a job but are unable to do so, what factors will persuade you to go get a college/ further education instead?</i>	
Discussion Point 4: What are their thoughts about the prospects of going to college after SHS?	
1. <i>Do you plan to go to college this coming school year?</i>	
2. <i>Where do you plan to enroll for college? SUC? LUC? Private HEI? What explains this choice? Do you foresee any problem in enrolling in the school of your choice?</i>	
3. <i>What course do you intend to enroll in? What explains this choice? Do you foresee any problem in enrolling in the course of your choice?</i>	

Appendix D. KII Guide Questions

PIDS STUDY ON K-TO-12 AND THE LABOR MARKET

FIRMS/ESTABLISHMENTS

Name of Respondent:

Designation:

Name of Firm:

Address of Firm:

Type of Firm: LGU _____ Private: _____ Others:

Interviewer: _____

Time started:

Documenter: _____

Time finished:

Date: _____

A. Profile of the Firm/Establishment

1. What is the nature of your firm? What do you do?

2. In what areas/locations do you operate?

3. How many employees do you have? From what areas/location do most of your employees come from?

4. What are the type of jobs do you have in your firm?

B. Perspective on Qualifications of K-to-12 Graduates

1. Can you briefly share with us your understanding of the K-to-12 program/curriculum?

2. Will you hire K-to-12 graduates in your firm? If YES, why? If NO, why not?

3. If YES, what type of jobs can you offer to K- to-12 graduates? What are the qualifications (skills, competence, etc) do you require for these types of jobs? How much is the starting salary you could offer?

Type of job	Qualifications/Competence	Starting Salary

4. If NO, what are the qualifications/attributes that will make/bring your firm to hire K-to-12 graduates?

C. Measures Done to Adjust Hiring Policies/Guidelines

1. Have you adjusted or changed/will you adjust or change your hiring policies and guidelines in the firm to consider K-to-12 graduates?

YES _____ NO _____

If YES, what changes or adjustments has your HR made in the hiring policies and process?

If NO, specify reasons.

2. What type of trainings and other assistance do K-to-12 graduates need to make them employable/more employable in your firm? Is your firm willing to provide assistance?

D. Actual Hiring

1. Are there K to 12 graduates who applied in your firm? What positions did they apply for? How many have applied? Among those who applied, how many were hired? How much was the salary given?

Positions applied for by K-to-12 graduates	Number who applied	Number who were hired	Salary given

Overall, are K12 graduates work-ready?

NCR

Firms/areas of operation	Positions open to K-to-12 graduates	Qualifications/Competencies	Starting salary
<p>Retail and wholesale distributor (sports-oriented)</p> <p>Manila, Laguna, Bulacan, Pampanga, Baguio, Cagayan, Iloilo, Cebu, Davao</p>	<p>Rank and file positions</p> <p><i>In the stores:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory assistant • Cashier • Racket stringers • Exercise equipment specialist • Sales clerk • Running consultants 	<p>Should have competencies & skills specific for the positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core competence on marketing and customer service/care; even the Cashier should know how to sell; experience in sales preferred • Product knowledge • Healthy and fit • With sports inclination • Not necessarily good in English but talks sensibly • Good attitude toward work • Open to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum wage • Plus incentives • Merit increase based on performance • Collective Bargaining Agreement

Firms/areas of operation	Positions open to K-to-12 graduates	Qualifications/Competencies	Starting salary
	In the warehouse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver • Picker • Inventory • Tagasalansan/Stacker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically fit (warehouse) • Driving skill (driver) 	
	<i>After sales:</i> Maintenance and repair of equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technicians • Mechanic (auto) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanical skills; with NCC 	
	<i>In the office:</i> Messenger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically fit 	
Real estate: builder of mid-rise condos and socialized	Support staff, mostly clerical in the following departments (note: still exploratory; depends on the need of the hiring department): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation • HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication skills • With work experience or had 300 -700 hours of internship • Confident and patient • With strong personality 	Minimum daily wage (P554) plus Cst of Living Allowance

Firms/areas of operation	Positions open to K-to-12 graduates	Qualifications/Competencies	Starting salary
housing units Metro Manila, Bulacan, Laguna, Cebu, Davao	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and Sales • Accounting/Finance 		
Hospitality: small hotel Pasig City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front office/ reception • Telephone operator • Room attendant • Housekeeping • Admin work, i.e., sales assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Presentable/professional-looking • Good attitude toward work • Trainable • Skill in OPERA system (for receptionist) • Had 300 – 350 hours of OJT 	Minimum wage
			Minimum wage

Firms/areas of operation	Positions open to K-to-12 graduates	Qualifications/Competencies	Starting salary
<p>Multi-industry company (financial services, IT, rural bank, hotels, real estate mgt)</p> <p>Nationwide</p>	<p>Routine positions which do not require facing/dealing with the clients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerical positions in branch operations (transactions processing, sales reporting & monitoring) • IT (graphic artist) • Hotels : routine admin positions (business center attendant, front desk officer, telephone operator) and room attendants • Driver, messenger 	<p>Required for all positions are college graduates except for driver and messenger but firm can adjust as long as K-12 graduates are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature in work • Patient • Imaginative and creative • To undergo in-depth and longer internship program that fits the needs of the industry, i.e., on customer care, sales and marketing 	
<p>City Government</p> <p>Pasig City</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laborer • Utility worker • Driver • Maintenance (aircon, refrigeration, automotive, electrician) 	<p>For maintenance technicians, in-house trainings for 8 days where certifications are issued</p>	<p>Minimum daily wage of P376.68</p>

Firms/areas of operation	Positions open to K-to-12 graduates	Qualifications/Competencies	Starting salary
City Government Makati City	Administrative assistant Clerks Encoding clerk Copying clerk Messengers Drivers Menial Jobs (mason, construction workers, street sweepers, laborers)	Below salary grade 5 or 6 based on CSC-Q's	Minimum wage
LGU University Makati City	They hire college graduates only because they have to maintain stature as a university. They do not have skills-based positions. Clerks should be college graduates. House-keeping, maintenance and security are outsourced. Messengers/ couriers are student assistants. The only available positions they can offer are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevator operators • Storekeepers • Drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication skills • Good in English 	Job order renewable every 6 months

Firms/areas of operation	Positions open to K-to-12 graduates	Qualifications/Competencies	Starting salary
Business Process Outsourcing (BPO): provision of voice & chat support Metro Mla,	Call agent positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice • Chat 	For college graduates, SHS graduates & 4-year HS graduates (old HS curriculum) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require 6 months of call center experience for 4-year HS graduates; not required for K-12 graduates • Good communication skills for all applicants 	PHP 15,000 to 18,000 monthly

Firms/areas of operation	Positions open to K-to-12 graduates	Qualifications/Competencies	Starting salary
Clark, Baguio, Bacolod, Cebu, Davao			
Fastfood chain	Hiring program has to be discussed with their Corporate Labor Relations and Legal team		

Cebu

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications and Competencies	Starting Salary
Agri-business: wholesale and retail of agrivet product nationwide	Operations					Regional minimum wage; probationary period
	Clerical (branch & sales)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Sales clerk only for SHS; TESDA NC	

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications and Competencies	Starting Salary
	Labor/Manial (utility men)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Utility man may be promoted as clerk if there is potential; working student is preferred	®ular wage adjustment plus benefits
	Office					
	Clerks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Graduates of 2-year course preferred for clerks; with TESDA NC	
	Messengers & drivers		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Driver's license for drivers	
	Warehouse					
	General clerks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		SHS for clerks should have NC, be trainable, respectful, and have a good attitude towards work	
	Order preparers		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	trainable, respectful, and have good attitude towards work	
	Packers		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Checkers		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Forklift operators		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Warehouse & delivery men		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Utility drivers		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Dispatchers		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Others					
	Welding technicians		<input type="checkbox"/>			

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications and Competencies	Starting Salary
	Automotive technicians		<input type="checkbox"/>		Equivalent to 2-year course; NC	
	Electrical technicians		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Housekeeping		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Hospitality industry: 3-star hotel with over 400 rooms Cebu City	Operations					Regional daily minimum wage
	Bar, Pol, and Busines Center Attendants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Skills on proper buzzing, table set-up, wine-pouring; trainable; open to learning; NC II; working students are preferred (more persevering). Good oral & written communication skills; can handle guests complaints	
	Housekeeping		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Public and Room Attendants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Front Office		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Back Office					
	HR Assistant	<input type="checkbox"/>				
	HR Support (training, recruitment)		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Purchasing, Receiving		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Stewarding, packing			<input type="checkbox"/>		
Cookery			<input type="checkbox"/>		TESDA certificare for cookery	

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications and Competencies	Starting Salary
	Accounting and Finance (clerical)	<input type="checkbox"/>			Equivalent to 2-year course for accounting and finance; analytical	
Shopping center management Cebu City	Assistants for various departments, i.e. leasing, tenant relations, marketing, accounting, recruitment, and security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		With experience; working students are preferred; if no experience. Should be outstanding student, mature Passionate about learning; driven. Working students are preferred	Regional minimum wage plus company benefits
	Rank and file employees for leisure and entertainment center (cashier, attendant, sales, clerk, porter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Manufacturing: Japanese-owned furniture-making company (for export and local market) Mactan Economic Zone 1, Lapu-lapu City	Clerical (encoder of stocks)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trainable In good health condition With skills specific to position With people skills If Grade 10, must be of legal age (18 years old) per DOLE policy	Regional minimum wage plus company benefits
	Production (carpentry, sanding, wood stoning, painting, packing, quality control)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Shipping, utility, and Maintenance			<input type="checkbox"/>		
Manufacturing: passenger ferries, yachts & other	Admin operations support				15% skills and 85% good attitude; open to learning.	Php 400 per day; Helper:
	Utility staff		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Production					

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications and Competencies	Starting Salary
marine transport (below 100 gross tonnage) Mactan Economic Zone 1, Lapu-lapu City	Welder, painter, laminator, electrician		<input type="checkbox"/>		Experience is important.	Php 366 per day
	Others					
	IT		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Carpenter/helper		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Technicians: electrical, mechanical, automotive		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Office (clerks, bookkeeper)		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Manufacturing: electronic parts (used in radio frequency, automotive, car parking system, medical machine, and windmills) Cebu Light Industrial Park, Lapu-lapu City	Level 2 (QC inspector II, trainer, clerk, team leader, encoder, warehouse helper)		<input type="checkbox"/>		Will not accept Grade 10 completers due to DOLE policy	Regional minimum wage
	Level 1 (Logistics driver, buyer, purchasing, direct operator, encoder, clerk, QC inspector I, messenger)		<input type="checkbox"/>			

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications and Competencies	Starting Salary
<p>Manufacturing: ship-building & repair</p> <p>West Cebu Industrial Park, Cebu</p>	<p>Skilled Workers (operators, technicians, electrician, welders, wirebrushers, checkers, maintenance of equipment)</p>		☐	☐	<p>Same treatment for SHS graduate & Grade 10 completers; college level & 2-year courses also considered</p> <p>Must have NK (Nippon Kaiji Kyokai) license; TESDA NC is considered but new entrants should be trained in the firm's training center to get NK license;</p> <p>Hiring thru subcontractors is easier than directly hiring K-12 graduates; subcon has pool of trained and experienced skilled workers</p> <p>Not aggressive personality</p> <p>Trainable/willing to learn</p>	<p>Job grade 3 (PHP 9k)</p> <p>Job grade 4 (PHP 10,900)</p>

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications and Competencies	Starting Salary
Hospitality industry: hotel Cebu City	Front Office		☐			Regional minimum wage plus SSS, PhilHealth, Pag-ibig
	Concierge, Guest Service, Associate				Good English communication skills, confident, computer literate	
	Food and Beverage		☐		Knowledge & skills in operating kitchen equipment, in knife-handling. Good communication skills; listening skills	
	Bartender					
	F&B Associate					
	Receptionist/Cashier					
	Kitchen					
	Line cook					
	Steward					
	Housekeeping		☐			
	Coordinator					
	Room and Public Attendants					
	Engineering		☐		Skills & experience in electronics & equipment; computer skills	
	Staff					
	IT					
Telephone operator						

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications and Competencies	Starting Salary
	Finance		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Liaison Officer					
	General Accounting Staf					
	Purchasing Assistance					
	Receiving Clerkl					
	Messenger					
	Sales			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sales and Banquet Coordinator						
Shipping Line: provider of cargo & passenger transportation Cebu City-based	Land-based					Regional minimum wage plus benefits
	Marketing and sales: Cashiering, Freight, Graphic Artist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		College level with experience	
		<input type="checkbox"/>			College level but not K-12	
	Terminal Operations: container yard staff e.g. forklift operators, truck drivers, welders, carpenters, plumbers, and other skilled workers.			<input type="checkbox"/>	Could understand simple instructions; with TESDA NC II; mature; responsible	
	<i>Sea-based positions are regulated and governed by Codes. They require college graduates with license.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

CALABARZON

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications & Competencies	Starting salary
Private Hospital Medical Tourism Park, Batangas	<i>Clinical:</i>			Will not hire JHS because they are not yet of working age; might be charged of child abuse & labor		Minimum wage for entry level; salary increase based on work performance
	<input type="checkbox"/> Nursing assistant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		K12 with caregiving track; well-trained w/ TESDA NC II; prefer nursing care which is more advance than caregiving	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Operating room technician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	<i>Administrative Office:</i>					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Receptionist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Prefers with background on medical field Trainable, does not easily give up, persevering, can work under pressure	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration/admitting clerk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical records clerk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefits clerk (Philhealth)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Support staff/clerk in every clinical & lab section	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	<i>Maintenance:</i>					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Electrician		<input type="checkbox"/>		With NC II; should be well-trained prior to recruitment	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plumber		<input type="checkbox"/>			

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications & Competencies	Starting salary
Coffee trading and manufacturing of coffee products Cavite	<i>Production</i>				No differentiation between SHS & previous 4-yr HS for production positions; not JHS because under-aged Preferred those with work experience but fresh SHS graduates may be accepted (to be trained on the first week once hired); quick to understand & learn	Minimum wage which is P317 in the area
	<input type="checkbox"/> Grinding & blending		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Packaging & sealing		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sewing of jute sack		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pahinante		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Driver		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<i>Warehouse:</i>					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Warehouse assistant		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<i>Office</i>				Will hire K12 but only to do manual encoding in ledgers and on part-time basis only	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistant bookkeeper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistant accountant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	<i>Sales crew:</i>					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sales assistant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Quick to learn	
<i>Coffee shop:</i>						
<input type="checkbox"/> Assistant barista	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Quick to learn		

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications & Competencies	Starting salary
Restaurant Lucena City, Quezon	<i>Office:</i>				Willing to be trained; With multi-tasking ability	Higher than minimum wage Minimum wage
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Waiters		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Willing to be trained; With multi-tasking ability For these positions, there is no differentiation of graduates of SHS with previous 4-year HS and even with JHS; as long as they know the job; w/ or w/o experience	
	Cooks		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Caretaker		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Resort Sariaya, Quezon	<input type="checkbox"/> Ground maintenance		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industrious Trainable Interested in work Dependable No differentiation among JHS completer, previous 4th year HS graduate, and K12 graduates. For the receptionist position, those who had OJT in hotels in Lucena are preferred	Regional minimum wage plus free lunch
	<input type="checkbox"/> Room attendant		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Waiter		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Receptionist		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Theme park Laguna	<i>Park-based:</i>				No differentiation if JHS completer or SHS graduate as long as they pass the training and meet the qualifications; should be at least 18 years old With consistently fun personality Willing to work on weekends & holidays	Minimum wage of P373 per day; overtime pay beyond 8 hours; double pay for holidays
	<input type="checkbox"/> Admission attendant		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ride attendant		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Guest service attendant		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications & Competencies	Starting salary
	<input type="checkbox"/> Game attendant		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Must love the job</p> <p>For park-based: can adjust to physical working condition (no aircon, exposed to sun and rain)</p> <p>TESDA or vocational graduate; with NC II, III or IV; hardworking; good work attitude</p>	
	<i>Souvenir shops:</i>					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Souvenir shop attendants		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Agribusiness Batangas	Accounting clerk		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Computer literate</p> <p>Patient & persevering</p> <p>Good attitude & maturity</p> <p>Not a working student because not focused on work</p>	Regional minimum wage; Philhealth; SSS; sick leave
	Secretarial jobs (filing & encoding)		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Poultry helpers			<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>May hire elementary level or even those who are not HS graduates but trainable; because works are simple;</p>	
	Spot welders (small machine only)			<input type="checkbox"/>		

Firms / areas of operation	Positions Available	College	Grade 12 (SHS)	Grade 10	Qualifications & Competencies	Starting salary
Manufacturing: coconut products Candelaria, Quezon	<i>Production:</i> • Sheller • Parer • Sorter • Picker • Dryer operator • Classifier • Weigher • Packer • Sealer		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> except parer & dryer operator	<input type="checkbox"/>	For production jobs, same treatment for SHS graduate & Grade 10 completers; For Parer, elementary graduates are accepted; for dryer operator, HS graduate but with experience and has worked his way up inside the firm	Regional minimum wage except for dryer operator & sampler who have higher than minimum wage
	<i>Laboratory:</i> • Sampler • Hygiene checker		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> except parer & dryer operator	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<i>Office:</i> • Accounting clerk • Payroll clerk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Open to K12 ABM track but prefers college graduates	
Resort Batangas					Since the firm is a micro enterprise, employees perform multiple tasks. Work is simple which do not require special skills. It accepts even elementary graduate as long as computer literate and can deal with customers.	Around P4,500 per month plus free meals & accommodation
	Receptionist/clerk		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Maintenance/cleaner		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		