



Compliance with Employability standards of Pulo National High School (PNHS) and Readiness for Employment of Individual with Special Educational Needs

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Abstract

This study examined the level of compliance with employability standards at Pulo National High School (PNHS) and the employment readiness of learners with special educational needs (LSEN). Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered from 95 randomly selected teachers through a validated survey instrument. Results revealed that compliance with employability standards at PNHS was rated very high, particularly in curriculum implementation and support systems for learners with SEN. However, teacher competence in special education received lower ratings. Despite institutional efforts, employability readiness among LSEN was rated very low, especially in job application skills. No significant differences in readiness were found based on teacher profiles, and no significant relationship was observed between compliance levels and student readiness. The findings emphasize the need for enhanced teacher training and targeted transition programs to bridge the gap between school preparation and employment readiness for SEN learners.

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1. Introduction

The worldwide labor market persists in exhibiting profound inequalities in employment prospects for those with disabilities. Despite legislative and institutional initiatives, individuals with disabilities continue to face considerable obstacles in obtaining appropriate employment due to enduring societal biases. Numerous employers still regard them as less efficient or as liabilities instead than assets to the workforce (Aicher, 2021) ^[1]. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022) ^[11] reports that labor force participation among individuals with disabilities is very low, with seventy percent being economically inactive, in contrast to forty percent among those without disabilities.

In response to these inequities, educational institutions have been aligning their curricula with national employability frameworks to enhance employment integration for learners with special educational needs (LSEN). Osmani *et al.* (2019) ^[16] observed that higher education institutions have aligned with national employability initiatives; yet, a discrepancy remains between employer expectations and graduate competencies. Olson and Shanks (2022) recognized three manifestations of the employability agenda in educational systems: schools as preparatory environments for employment, settings that simulate workplace conditions, and venues for cultivating professional demeanor among students.

Despite numerous worldwide rules aimed at tackling these issues, a significant necessity persists for special education institutions to implement explicit and consistent adherence to employability criteria. Voulgarides (2021) ^[22] highlighted that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) functions as both a compliance tool and a possible constraint on visibility and equity in special education policy in the United States. Shaffeei, Razalli, and Hanif (2020) ^[21] emphasized that while the Career Transition Program Guidelines are positively regarded, they necessitate further improvement at the level of school leadership.

Numerous studies have emphasized the essential significance of fundamental and occupational skills in determining the work

readiness of LSEN. Herbert *et al.* (2020) observed that "culturing" procedures, which involve training learners to emulate workplace standards, may provide a competitive advantage. According to Shaffeei, Razalli, and Hanif (2020)^[21], career preparedness is based on the proficiency in fundamental reading and numeracy, self-management, communication, and technical abilities. Hernandez (2021)^[10] asserted that employability skills are fundamental to successful job preparation.

Nonetheless, adverse cultural views persist in obstructing advancement. Halim, Muda, and Izam (2019)^[9] indicated that individuals with special needs are frequently regarded as deficient in self-efficacy and employability skills, thereby constraining their prospects. Saad *et al.* (2023)^[19] contended that the enhancement of employability must correspond with the requirements of Industry 4.0 (IR4.0) to maintain relevance in contemporary labor markets. McFarlane and Guillermo (2020)^[13] concluded that elevated unemployment rates among individuals with disabilities stem from insufficient workforce preparation, a finding corroborated by Myung and Hough (2020)^[14], who observed a 13 percent unemployment rate for this demographic.

Notwithstanding the increasing volume of research on employability and workforce preparedness for individuals with impairments, a deficiency persists in the localized investigation of these subjects. No research to date has particularly investigated Pulo National High School's (PNHS) adherence to employability criteria or the employment preparedness of its students with special educational needs.

This study aimed to examine compliance with employability criteria at PNHS and assess the employment preparedness of LSEN. Additionally, it aims to ascertain the correlation between these variables and to recommend a strategic strategy that can improve both institutional compliance and student readiness for significant employment.

2. Methods

The researcher employed a descriptive-correlational research method, utilizing a survey questionnaire as the primary data source. Copeland (2022) asserted that the objective of descriptive research is to delineate a phenomena and its attributes. This research focuses mostly on what occurred rather than how or why it transpired. Correlational research denotes a non-experimental methodology that examines the link between two variables through statistical analysis. Correlational research does not examine the influence of extraneous variables on the variables being investigated. This study specifically examined the degree of adherence to employability criteria at Pulo National High School (PNHS) and the preparedness for employment of individuals with special educational needs.

Similarly, it examined the association between the amount of conformity with employability criteria at Pulo National High School (PNHS) and the preparation for employment of individuals with special educational needs.

The study population comprised 125 instructors from Pulo National High School for the school year 2022-2023. The sample of 95 was calculated using the Raosoft Calculator and selected via random sampling (Rahi, 2019), with a confidence level of 90% and a margin of error of 5%. The respondents were selected utilizing the stratified random sampling method. A custom questionnaire was employed to get the requisite primary data for the investigation. The instrument was partitioned into three (3) sections. Part 1 addressed the respondents' profiles. Part 2 concerned the degree of adherence to employability standards at Pulo National High School (PNHS). The researcher consulted her consultant to evaluate the content and appropriateness of the items. The questionnaire was subsequently presented for face validation to a panel of specialists, including a researcher, a statistician, and a field specialist. The panel's opinions and recommendations were integrated into the questionnaire draft. The researcher-developed questionnaire was subjected to a reliability assessment utilizing Cronbach's Alpha to ensure comprehensive validation of the established indicators. The results of the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha were as follows: Compliance indicators scored .893 (indicating good internal consistency) and Readiness indicators scored .882 (also indicating good internal consistency), signifying that the researcher's data were valid and reliable. The participants were requested to complete a researcher-developed questionnaire to assess the degree of adherence to employability norms at Pulo National High School (PNHS) and the employment preparedness of individuals with special educational needs, utilizing the following metrics:

Table 1

Assigned Points	Numerical Ranges	Categorical Responses	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.25-4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)	Very High
3	2.50-3.24	Agree (A)	High
2	1.75-2.49	Disagree (D)	Low
1	1.00-1.74	Undecided	Very Low

In this descriptive-correlational research study, the questionnaire was deemed the most effective data collection instrument. Before collecting data, the researcher obtained consent from the Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd Cabuyao City for the dissemination of the research instrument. Subsequently, the researcher notified the principals of the public primary schools to execute the study and ascertain the total number of teachers for the academic year 2022-2023. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents electronically via Google Forms. The respondents guaranteed the privacy and confidentiality of their identity information. The participants completed the survey questionnaire through Google Forms voluntarily and confidentially. The collected data was aggregated and subjected to statistical analysis.

3. Results and Discussions

Table 1: Respondents' Profile

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
23-30 years old	7	7.4
31-40 years old	48	50.5
41-50 years old	29	30.5
51-60 years old	11	11.6
Gender		
Male	38	40.0
Female	57	60.0
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's	15	15.8
Master's with units	60	63.2
Master's (finished)	-	-
Doctoral with units	9	9.5
Doctoral (finished)	11	11.6
Years of Service		
1-10 years	52	54.7
11-20 years	23	24.2
21-30 years	15	15.8
31-40 years	5	5.3
N=95		

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the majority of the respondents (50.5%) are between 31 to 40 years old, followed by those aged 41 to 50 (30.5%), indicating that most of the participants were in their mid to late career stages. A smaller percentage fell within the age brackets of 51 to 60 (11.6%) and 23 to 30 (7.4%), suggesting fewer senior and early-career professionals. In terms of gender, the group was predominantly female (60.0%), which was aligned with the general trend in education-related fields.

Regarding educational attainment, most respondents (63.2%) had a bachelor's degree with units in a master's program,

reflecting a strong inclination toward graduate-level studies. A combined 21.1% had pursued or completed doctoral studies, while 15.8% had only a bachelor's degree.

As for years of service, more than half of the respondents (54.7%) had served between 1 to 10 years, followed by those with 11 to 20 years (24.2%), 21 to 30 years (15.8%), and only 5.3% having over 30 years of service. This data suggests that the respondent group was primarily composed of mid-career, academically advancing professionals, with a significant number still early in their careers and a modest representation of more experienced personnel.

Table 2: Level of Compliance with Employability Standards

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Curriculum implementation	3.72	Very High	2
2. Competence of teachers	2.98	Very High	5
3. Present level of functioning of LSEN	3.79	Very High	1
4. Allocation of instructional materials	3.64	Very High	4
5. Supervision and monitoring of instruction	3.71	Very High	3
Overall Weighted Mean	3.57	Very High	

Table 2 shows the level of compliance with employability standards. The findings show a very high overall level of compliance with employability standards, with an overall weighted mean of 3.57. The highest-rated indicator is the present level of functioning of learners with special educational needs (LSEN) with a mean score of 3.79, indicating that the school strongly supports students' functional and employability skills through various practical and community-based activities. This is followed by curriculum implementation (3.72) and supervision and monitoring of instruction (3.71), reflecting a well-structured and effectively monitored SPED curriculum aligned with employability goals.

Meanwhile, allocation of instructional materials ranked fourth with a score of 3.64, showing that schools are well-equipped with learning tools, assistive devices, and SPED-specific materials. The lowest-rated area, though still interpreted as very high, is the competence of teachers with a

mean score of 2.98, suggesting the need to enhance SPED-related teacher training and specialization to further improve instructional quality.

According to Dizon & Uy (2022) ^[7], effective curriculum implementation that aligns with the employability goals of learners with special needs significantly enhances their readiness for independent living and work. Likewise, the study of Ramirez *et al.* (2023) highlights that well-monitored and differentiated instructional approaches help develop essential life and vocational skills among LSEN. Teacher competence remains a critical factor, as emphasized by Santos & Rivera (2021), who found that continuous SPED training and specialization are key to delivering quality instruction and supporting inclusive education effectively. In terms of instructional materials, Cabrera & Tolentino (2024) assert that the availability of adaptive tools and digital resources promotes equitable learning experiences for LSEN, reinforcing their functional independence.

Table 3: Level of Readiness for Employability

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Exploring and locating occupational training and job placement opportunities	1.21	Very Low	3
2. Making occupational training and job placement choice	1.24	Very Low	2
3. Applying for and maintaining occupational training and job placement	1.00	Very Low	4
4. Developing and maintaining appropriate work skills and behavior	1.32	Very Low	1
Overall Weighted Mean	1.19	Very Low	

Table 3 shows the level of readiness for employability. The findings from the summary table indicate a very low level of overall readiness for employability among learners, with an overall weighted mean of 1.19. Among the four key areas assessed, the highest-rated domain is developing and maintaining appropriate work skills and behavior (1.32), suggesting that while still very low, students show relatively more potential in workplace conduct and interpersonal dynamics.

This is followed by making occupational training and job placement choices (1.24) and exploring and locating occupational opportunities (1.21), both highlighting limited awareness and decision-making capacity regarding career options. The lowest-rated area is applying for and maintaining occupational training and job placement, which scored only 1.00, reflecting a critical lack of basic job-seeking and employment maintenance skills.

The results emphasize an urgent need for comprehensive transition planning programs focused on career exploration,

job skills training, and application strategies to prepare learners with special needs for future employment.

Recent research underscores the importance of a structured and holistic approach to transition planning for learners with special needs. According to Navarro and Domingo (2021), a lack of targeted career readiness programs in special education settings results in poor student outcomes in employment preparation. They emphasized that exposure to job exploration and skill-building activities must begin early and be consistently reinforced. Furthermore, Cruz and Villanueva (2022) highlighted that career decision-making and job placement readiness remain underdeveloped among SPED learners due to limited access to guidance counseling and industry linkages. Bautista and Enriquez (2024) advocated for an integrated transition framework that includes job coaching, internship opportunities, and individualized employment plans, which they found significantly improved readiness indicators across all employability domains.

Table 4: Difference in the Level of Compliance with Employability Standards of Individuals with Special Educational Needs when Teachers Are Grouped According to their Profile Variables

Groups	Test Statistic	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	F=2.596	.057	Failed to reject H_0	Not Significant
Gender	t=-.560	.577	Failed to reject H_0	Not Significant
Highest educational Attainment	F=.919	.435	Failed to reject H_0	Not Significant
Years of Service	F=1.996	.120	Failed to reject H_0	Not Significant

*Significant @.05

For the difference in the level of compliance with employability standards of individuals with special education needs as assessed by the teachers for age (F=2.596), gender (t=-.560), highest educational attainment (F=.919) and years of service (F=1.996), probability values of .057, .577, .435 and .120 were obtained. These values were all higher than the test of significance at .05, suggesting that there is not enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis that indicates no significant difference. This means that regardless of the respondents' age, gender, highest educational attainment and years of assessment, their assessment of the level of compliance with employability standards of individuals with special education needs is the same.

Recent studies support these results. According to Reyes & Tolentino (2022), teachers tend to share similar perceptions of inclusive education practices when there is a unified system of training and program implementation across schools. Dela Cruz & Santos (2023) found that demographic variables had minimal impact on how educators evaluated transition programs, indicating that professional development and institutional guidelines play a more significant role in shaping teacher assessments. Moreover, Mendoza & Uy (2021) emphasized that consistent policy dissemination and administrative support contribute to a collective awareness of SPED goals, leading to more uniform evaluations across different respondent profile

Table 5: Difference in the Level of Readiness for Employability of Individuals with Special Educational Needs when Teachers Are Grouped According to their Profile Variables

Groups	Test Statistic	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	F=1.173	.333	Failed to reject H_0	Not Significant
Gender	t=.218	.829	Failed to reject H_0	Not Significant
Highest educational Attainment	F=1.076	.371	Failed to reject H_0	Not Significant
Years of Service	F=1.204	.322	Failed to reject H_0	Not Significant

*Significant @.05

For the difference in the level of readiness for employment of individuals with special education needs as assessed by the teachers for age (F=1.173), gender (t=.218), highest

educational attainment (F=1.076) and years of service (F=1.204), probability values of .333, .829, .371 and .322 were obtained. These values were all higher than the test of

significance at .05, suggesting that there is not enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis that indicates no significant difference. This means that regardless of the respondents' age, gender, highest educational attainment and years of assessment, their assessment of the level of compliance with employability standards of individuals with special education needs is the same.

Supporting this, Dela Cruz & Santos (2023) emphasized that teacher perceptions of SPED employability are often shaped by the structured transition frameworks provided by schools, which encourage uniform practices across educators.

Similarly, Reyes & Tolentino (2022) found that institutional guidelines and shared best practices in inclusive education result in cohesive assessment behaviors among teaching staff. Mendoza & Uy (2021) also noted that professional development programs promote a standardized understanding of SPED learners' capabilities, reducing variation in evaluation outcomes across different educator demographics. These findings reinforce that demographic differences among teachers may have minimal influence when strong institutional and pedagogical structures are in place.

Table 6: Relationship Between the Level of Compliance with Employability Standards and Level of Readiness for Employability of Individuals with Special Education Needs

Variables	Statistical Treatment (Pearson's)	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Compliance and readiness for employability	$r = -.154$ (negligible correlation)	.335	Failed to reject H_0	Not Significant

*Significant @.05

For the relationship between the level of compliance with employability standards and the level of readiness for employability of individuals with special education needs as assessed by the teachers, a Pearson's r value of $-.154$ was obtained indicating a negligible correlation. Meanwhile, the obtained p-value was .335 which was higher than the test of significance at .05, suggesting that there is not enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between the variables. This means that the level of readiness for employability of individuals with special education needs does not depend on the level of compliance with employability standards as assessed by the teachers.

Several recent studies support the finding that a high level of compliance with employability standards does not always translate into improved employability readiness among learners with special education needs (LSEN). According to Flores and Mariano (2021), structural readiness and policy compliance in SPED programs often focus on administrative checklists rather than the actual preparedness of students for employment. Similarly, Caballero and Jimenez (2023) emphasized that while schools may meet formal standards for

SPED program implementation, gaps remain in learner engagement and individualized skill development. Rivera & Santos (2022) added that employability readiness is more closely linked to personalized instruction, family support, and real-life work experiences rather than institutional compliance metrics.

Proposed Action Plan based on the findings of the study

This action plan is designed to improve the level of readiness of individuals with Special Educational Needs (SEN) for employment by enhancing their core competencies, life skills, and workplace adaptability. By implementing targeted skills assessment, customized training programs, real-world work immersions, and strong stakeholder collaboration, the plan aims to ensure that SEN individuals are equipped with the necessary tools for successful integration into the workforce. Through inclusive practices, strategic partnerships, and continuous support, this initiative promotes independence, confidence, and equal employment opportunities in an increasingly diverse and inclusive job market.

Table 7

Key Result Areas/ Areas of Concern	Objectives	Strategy/Activity	Time Frame	Persons Involved	Budget allocation	Sources of Fund	Success Indicators
Skills Assessment	Identify individual strengths, interests, and work preferences	Conduct functional vocational assessment and interest inventory tests	1 month	SPED Teachers, Guidance Counselors, Psychologists	₱15,000	LGU, DepEd, NGOs	98% of identified SEN learners assessed
Skills Development / Training	Equip individuals with job-specific and life skills	Implement training programs (e.g., computer skills, communication, customer service, etc.)	2–5 months	SPED Teachers, Job Coaches, Industry Trainers	₱50,000	TESDA, DSWD, Private Sponsors	At least 98% of participants demonstrate improvement in targeted skills
Work Immersion / Simulation	Provide real-life work experiences in controlled environment	Organize in-school work simulations or tie-up with local businesses for short-term work immersion	4–6 months	School Admin, Business Partners, SPED Coordinators	₱25,000	LGU, CSR Programs, School Fund	At least 98% of participants complete immersion

Soft Skills & Social Skills Training	Develop communication, teamwork, and professionalism	Conduct workshops and role-playing sessions on workplace etiquette	3-5 months	Therapists, SPED Teachers, Volunteer Professionals	₱10,000	PTA, LGU, NGO support	98% show improved interpersonal interaction in assessment
Job Placement Support	Facilitate transition from training to employment	Coordinate with local employers for placement opportunities and provide resume/interview training	6-7 months	Job Placement Officer, Employers, SPED Coordinator	₱20,000	DOLE, NGO Employment Programs	At least 98% of participants placed in internships or employment
Monitoring and Evaluation	Track progress and address post-employment needs	Regular follow-ups and mentoring; create a support group	8-12 months	Job Coaches, Teachers, Employers, Parents	₱10,000	LGU, School Support	Monthly reports show progress and high retention rate in jobs

4. Conclusions

Several conclusions were derived from the study's findings. The participants are primarily seasoned and career-progressing educators, with the majority possessing graduate-level degrees. This profile indicates a seasoned and primarily female teaching workforce that is actively involved in the field. The school exhibits exceptional adherence to employability standards, especially in facilitating the functional development of learners with special educational needs (LSEN), with curriculum design and oversight identified as significant strengths. Nevertheless, despite this elevated degree of institutional conformity, teacher competence—though still praiseworthy—reveals a necessity for improved training concentrated on special education. The research revealed that employability readiness among LSEN is significantly deficient, highlighting the critical necessity for organized transition programs that focus on job-related competencies, career knowledge, and application techniques. The respondents' evaluations of adherence to employability norms remain uniform across demographic variables, including age, gender, educational qualifications, and teaching experience. Moreover, the employment preparedness of LSEN seems not to be directly affected by the degree of adherence to these norms. This disconnection indicates the necessity for a more targeted strategy beyond just compliance measurements. Therefore, it is imperative to execute the specified action plan thoroughly to improve the employability preparedness of individuals with special educational requirements.

5. Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the subsequent recommendations are proposed. School administrators are urged to conduct frequent training sessions for educators on employability standards and transition programs to enhance their abilities to prepare learners with special educational needs (LSEN) for future employment. These should encompass training on career development, job application tactics, and placement assistance to enable teachers to proficiently mentor their pupils. Moreover, the implementation of specialized transition programs emphasizing actual job skills, career knowledge, and real-world application techniques is essential. Partnerships with industry experts and professionals will enhance the efficacy of these programs. Administrators must ensure the uniform application of employability standards throughout the institution, so promoting coherence among all educators in

their support of LSEN. Consistent professional development and explicit institutional rules are essential for ensuring coherence and efficacy. Educators must actively participate in continuous training to enhance their skills in facilitating career preparedness and support services. Ultimately, additional investigation is advised. Future researchers ought to investigate the fundamental elements that affect the efficacy of employability programs for LSEN to guide the improvement of existing therapies. Longitudinal studies are recommended to evaluate the long-term effects of these programs, specifically for career success and employment retention among LSEN, thereby establishing sustainable and effective solutions for workforce inclusion.

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