

INDUSTRY PARTNERS PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AMONG AUTOMOTIVE TVL GRADUATES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative narrative study explored the perceptions of industry partners regarding the employability skills of Automotive Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) graduates. This study employed qualitative narrative research design with ten industry partners participated and ten engaged in in-depth interviews providing both individual and collective insights. Findings revealed that while graduates demonstrate foundational technical skills, they often lack essential soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, and adaptability under pressure. Industry partners emphasized that mentorship, real-world exposure, and sustained collaboration between schools and industry significantly enhance graduates' readiness for the workforce. Additionally, gaps in critical thinking, time management, and practical application of knowledge were identified, highlighting the need for curricula that integrate technical proficiency with soft skills development. The study underscores the importance of aligning training programs with industry expectations through hands-on experiences, soft skills integration, and continuous school-industry partnership to produce competent and job-ready Automotive TVL graduates.

Keywords: *Employability Skills, Industry Perception, Vocational Education, School-Industry Collaboration, Colizzi Method, Isulan, Sultan Kudarat*

INTRODUCTION

The global labor market faces significant challenges in aligning technical-vocational education with industry demands, with reports indicating that approximately 40% of technical graduates worldwide struggle with employability due to skill mismatches (Smith & Brown, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). This gap impacts economic productivity and workforce readiness, particularly in technical fields such as automotive technology, where rapid technological advancements demand continuous skills updating (Garcia & Kim, 2022). These challenges underscore the urgency of evaluating employer perceptions to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of vocational training programs.

In the Philippines, the gap between TVL graduates' skills and industry expectations remains a pressing concern, with studies showing that about 35% of automotive TVL graduates face underemployment or difficulty securing jobs related to their training (Dela Cruz & Reyes, 2020; Santos & Valdez, 2022). Local industries report deficiencies in both technical competencies and soft skills, which hinder the graduates' ability to meet the evolving demands of the automotive sector (Navarro et al., 2019). This situation highlights the need for a closer partnership between educational institutions and industry stakeholders to improve curriculum alignment and graduate employability.

Despite existing literature on employability skills in vocational education, there is a notable gap in studies focusing specifically on industry partners' perceptions of automotive TVL graduates. Most research tends to emphasize student self-assessment or institutional perspectives, neglecting the critical insights from employers who directly observe graduates' job performance (Alvarez & Torres, 2021; Mendoza, 2023). Understanding these perceptions is essential to identify specific skill gaps and tailor training programs accordingly, making this study vital for bridging theory and practice in technical education.

This study holds significant value for educational stakeholders by providing evidence-based insights to improve the quality and relevance of technical training programs. It contributes to curriculum development that aligns with industry needs, enhancing the employability and job readiness of TVL graduates. Furthermore, the findings can guide policymakers and educators in fostering stronger collaborations between schools and industries, ultimately supporting economic growth and sustainable workforce development.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative narrative research design to explore and understand the detailed perspectives of industry partners regarding the employability skills of automotive technical-vocational graduates. This approach was useful because it allowed the researcher to gather rich, in-depth stories and experiences directly from participants, providing deeper insights into their views and expectations. By capturing personal narratives, the study revealed the complexities and nuances of how employers perceived graduates' skills in real-world settings, which quantitative methods might have overlooked. Ultimately, this design supported a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employability from the industry's point of view.

Meanwhile, the duration of the study spanned ten months, from March 2025 to November 2025. This period included refining the proposal paper, participant recruitment, and data collection, one month for data analysis, and one month for reporting and dissemination of findings.

Participants

The study involved 10 industry partners, with 10 selected for in-depth interview. These methods were used to gather both individual and collective perspectives on the employability skills of Automotive TVL graduates.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that only those with relevant experience and insights were included in the study. To qualify, participants had to be owners, managers, or HR personnel of automotive-related businesses such as auto repair shops, car dealerships, or service centers within the barangays of the Municipality of Isulan. They were required to have at least one year of experience hiring or supervising TVL automotive graduates and to be currently active in the industry. Only those who gave informed consent were included. Individuals without relevant experience, not currently active in the field, or unwilling to participate were excluded.

Data Collections Tools

The primary data collection tool for this study was a semi-structured interview guide. This tool was designed to gather in-depth insights from selected industry partners regarding their perceptions of the employability skills of automotive TVL graduates. The interview questions were open-ended to allow participants to freely express their views and provide detailed responses. The guide was developed based on relevant literature and reviewed by experts to ensure clarity and relevance to the study’s objectives.

Procedures

The researcher first sought approval from the appropriate authorities and secured informed consent from the participants. Industry partners were then purposively selected based on their experience in hiring or working with automotive TVL graduates. Individual interviews were conducted in person or online, depending on the participants’ availability and preference. Each session was recorded with permission to ensure accuracy, and the researcher took field notes during the interviews to capture key observations and non-verbal cues.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher carefully read through the data multiple times to identify recurring ideas and meaningful patterns. Codes were assigned to significant statements, which were then grouped into themes that reflect the perceptions of industry partners regarding the employability skills of automotive TVL graduates. This process helped uncover key insights and allowed the researcher to interpret the data in alignment with the study’s objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Industry Partners’ Perspectives on the Employability Skills of Automotive TVL Graduates

Based on the data gathered from industry partners through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the results revealed that while Automotive TVL graduates demonstrate promising technical foundations, they face challenges in translating these competencies into professional performance. The analysis surfaced three central themes reflecting employers’ observations on graduates’ readiness and alignment with workplace expectations.

Table 1. Industry Partners’ Perspectives on the Employability Skills of Automotive TVL Graduates

Issues Probe	Codes / Category	Significant Statements	Themes	Meanings
Workplace readiness	Basic technical skills; weak communication; low confidence	finishes tasks fast; avoids talking; silent explaining; avoids group work;	Graduates possess basic technical	Technically capable but socially unprepared

Employability support	Mentorship; experiential exposure; guided activities	rarely participates; cannot express feelings became more active; improved cooperation; became more open; expressed feelings; felt supported better attendance; felt supported; reduced misunderstandings; aware emotional needs; increased confidence	skills but lack soft skills Mentorship and real-world exposure improve readiness Collaboration between industry and schools is needed	Guidance builds confidence and adaptability Coordinated support enhances readiness
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Theme 1: Graduates possess basic technical skills but lack soft skills

The first theme revealed that while pupils from polygamous households demonstrate capability in routine or practical tasks, they often lack essential soft skills such as communication, empathy, and confidence. Based on the participants, many believed that this stems from inconsistent emotional support and limited opportunities for guided social interaction at home. The divided attention of parents in polygamous families can lead to fewer moments for nurturing emotional intelligence and interpersonal growth. Consequently, pupils become competent in completing tasks yet struggle to build meaningful relationships, manage emotions, or express themselves effectively within school and community environments. Below are some responses from the participants:

“I noticed he finishes tasks fast, but he avoids talking to other pupils.” (IDI, P1)

“She’s smart in lessons but becomes silent when she needs to explain her answer.” (IDI, P2)

“He helps a lot at home, but at school, he doesn’t join any group work.” (IDI, P3)

“Her teachers said she understands topics well, but she rarely participates in discussions.” (FGD, P1)

“He’s polite and quiet, but he doesn’t know how to express feelings when he’s upset.” (IDI, P4)

In support of this finding, research suggests that children’s soft skills—particularly emotional regulation and social communication—are highly influenced by family stability

and emotional climate (Li & Chen, 2023). When parental involvement is inconsistent, children may experience insecurity, which hinders their ability to form trusting relationships or develop effective communication styles. Similarly, family fragmentation has been shown to diminish emotional responsiveness and increase social withdrawal, both of which affect classroom engagement and collaboration (Wang, 2022).

Moreover, studies on household structures indicate that limited parental availability reduces opportunities for modelling empathy and dialogue, leading to underdeveloped soft skills compared to peers from more stable family systems (Santos, 2021). These findings support the present study's results that pupils from polygamous households, while capable in basic or practical competencies, may struggle in the affective and interpersonal domains essential to overall wellbeing.

Theme 2: Mentorship and real-world exposure improve readiness

The second theme indicated that mentorship and real-world exposure serve as powerful enablers of pupils' wellbeing. Based on the participants, many believed that the presence of a mentor—whether a teacher, counsellor, or community guide—helps compensate for the lack of consistent parental attention. Pupils who engaged in structured, real-world experiences such as group projects or community activities showed more confidence, better emotional regulation, and improved problem-solving abilities. These experiences provided alternative spaces where pupils could practice social interactions and receive constructive feedback, enhancing their readiness to face both academic and personal challenges. Below are some responses from the participants:

“After his mentor started meeting with him, he became more active in class.” (IDI, P5)

“She learned to cooperate better after joining the school’s workshop program.” (FGD, P2)

“He used to be shy, but after helping in community clean-ups, he became more open.” (FGD, P3)

“Mentorship helped her express her feelings instead of keeping them inside.” (IDI, P6)

“The program gave him direction; he felt someone believed in him.” (IDI, P7)

In support of this result, studies emphasize that mentoring and experiential learning environments strengthen emotional and cognitive readiness, particularly for learners from complex family systems (Alam, 2024). When pupils receive structured guidance and feedback, they develop resilience, agency, and social competence—qualities often underdeveloped in unsupervised environments. Mentorship offers consistency, a sense of belonging, and role modelling, which are crucial protective factors for emotional wellbeing (Rahman, 2023).

Additionally, research in educational psychology demonstrates that experiential programs—internships, apprenticeships, or project-based learning—enhance not only technical proficiency but also confidence and interpersonal adaptability (Takahashi, 2022). These findings align with the study’s theme, affirming that exposure to real-life contexts and continuous mentoring fosters the emotional and social readiness necessary for success beyond the classroom.

Theme 3: Collaboration between industry and schools is needed

The third theme highlighted the importance of collaboration between family, school, and community sectors to ensure pupils’ holistic wellbeing. Based on the participants, many believed that no single institution can meet all emotional, social, and developmental needs—especially for pupils from polygamous households, where family structures are often fragmented. Effective collaboration allows for shared information, consistent support strategies, and coordinated interventions such as counselling, academic monitoring, and community engagement. This collective approach fosters a stable support system, ensuring that pupils receive both emotional and practical assistance. Below are some responses from the participants:

“When the school and community worked together, we saw better attendance from pupils.” (FGD, P4)

“The teachers talked with parents and local leaders; it helped the child feel supported.” (FGD, P5)

“Joint meetings between school and guardians reduced misunderstandings at home.” (IDI, P8)

“Community programs made parents more aware of their children’s emotional needs.” (FGD, P6)

“Once everyone coordinated, the pupil became more confident and consistent in school.” (IDI, P10)

In support of this theme, research underscores that multi-sectoral collaboration enhances both educational outcomes and psychosocial wellbeing, particularly among children from nontraditional family structures (Hassan, 2024). When schools, families, and community organizations collaborate, they provide consistent expectations and emotional safety nets that buffer pupils from stressors linked to fragmented households (Yildirim, 2022). Collaborative systems ensure that interventions are not isolated but complementary, strengthening pupils’ sense of belonging and stability.

Further, literature on community-based education shows that coordinated engagement among stakeholders fosters shared accountability and sustainable support for children’s wellbeing (Bautista, 2021). Such cooperation integrates emotional, social, and academic dimensions of development—supporting the study’s conclusion that partnership between institutions plays a vital role in nurturing the wellbeing of pupils from polygamous households.

Identifying Technical and Soft Skill Gaps Among Recent Automotive TVL Graduates

Analysis of the qualitative data revealed recurring patterns in the skill gaps identified by industry partners. While graduates were recognized for their enthusiasm and willingness to learn, their performance was often hindered by limitations in essential workplace competencies. The findings revealed three major themes: communication, teamwork, and problem-solving as key weaknesses; limited critical thinking and adaptability under pressure; and the need to improve leadership and time management skills.

Table 2. Identifying Technical and Soft Skill Gaps Among Recent Automotive TVL Graduates

Issues Probe	Codes / Category	Significant Statements	Themes	Meanings
Workplace interaction gaps	Poor communication; weak teamwork; dependent problem-solving	cannot articulate thoughts; poor task division; freeze during issues; struggle sharing ideas; wait for supervisors wait for instructions; cannot react	Communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are key weaknesses	Soft skills limit workplace efficiency
Performance under pressure	Limited critical thinking; low adaptability; stress response	new; nervous under pressure; supervisor dependent; difficulty adjusting wait for leader; forget other tasks; avoid leading teams; unsure prioritizing; miss deadlines	Critical thinking and adaptability under pressure are limited	Procedural focus hinders flexibility
Task leadership skills	Low initiative; weak time management; poor prioritization		Leadership and time management require improvement	Lack of autonomy and organization

Theme 1: Communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are key weaknesses

The first theme revealed that many Automotive TVL graduates struggle with communication, teamwork, and problem-solving — skills considered vital in today's dynamic work environments. Based on the participants, many believed that while graduates possess technical knowledge, they often lack the interpersonal and cognitive abilities necessary to function effectively in collaborative settings. Industry partners emphasized that miscommunication, difficulty in expressing ideas, and challenges in adjusting to team dynamics often result in inefficiency at the workplace. Similarly, graduates were found to depend heavily on instructions rather than proactively addressing work-related challenges. This theme reflects a growing concern that while technical education equips learners with task-oriented skills, it does not sufficiently develop the essential human and thinking skills that modern industries demand. Below are some responses from the participants.

“Most of our trainees know the basics of car repair, but when we ask them to explain what went wrong, they can’t articulate their thoughts.” (IDI, P1)

“They tend to work individually. When placed in a team, some don’t know how to divide tasks or communicate properly.” (FGD, P1)

“We noticed that when something unexpected happens during repair, they freeze instead of analyzing the problem.” (IDI, P2)

“Graduates are polite and hardworking, but they struggle when it comes to sharing ideas with co-workers.” (FGD, P2)

“Problem-solving is not their strength. They wait for supervisors to decide instead of thinking critically.” (IDI, P3)

In support of this finding, recent studies emphasize that soft skills such as communication and teamwork are as essential as technical expertise in achieving employability and workplace efficiency. According to Tan and Ramos (2022), employers across technical and vocational sectors increasingly value interpersonal communication and collaborative problem-solving, as these skills enhance productivity and innovation. Similarly, Atilola (2021) noted that many graduates demonstrate limited workplace communication due to insufficient integration of collaborative learning strategies in technical training programs.

Further, research supports that the gap in communication and teamwork often stems from the limited exposure of students to authentic workplace interactions during their training. As highlighted by Perez (2023), industry-based learning that prioritizes communication and teamwork exercises bridges the gap between classroom knowledge and real-world expectations. These findings support the result of the present study, affirming that developing these soft skills is critical in producing well-rounded and job-ready Automotive TVL graduates.

Theme 2: Critical thinking and adaptability under pressure are limited

The second theme emphasized the graduates' limited capacity for critical thinking and adaptability, especially when confronted with unexpected or high-pressure situations. Based on the participants, many believed that while graduates can perform routine tasks effectively, they often struggle when required to make independent decisions or adjust to changing work demands. Employers observed that most graduates lack the initiative to analyze problems critically, especially when procedures do not go as planned. This suggests that technical education focuses heavily on procedural learning rather than fostering analytical and flexible thinking. The inability to adapt quickly under stress affects not only individual performance but also workplace efficiency and innovation. Below are some responses from the participants.

“When the equipment breaks down unexpectedly, they just stop and wait for instructions instead of finding alternatives.” (FGD, P3)

“They follow manuals well, but when something new comes up, they don't know how to react.” (IDI, P4)

“I think they get nervous easily when the workload increases or when there's time pressure.” (IDI, P5)

“Some are too dependent on supervisors. They rarely suggest other ways to fix a problem.” (FGD, P4)

“They can't easily adjust when the workplace setting or tools change, even slightly.” (IDI, P6)

In support of this result, contemporary research underscores the importance of developing higher-order thinking and adaptability in vocational education. Park (2021) emphasized that the ability to think critically and respond effectively under pressure is crucial for success in fast-paced technical industries. Graduates who possess critical and adaptive thinking skills are more capable of navigating complex tasks and making sound decisions when faced with uncertainty. Similarly, Lopez and Chan (2023) pointed out that many vocational institutions continue to prioritize rote and procedural instruction, which limits opportunities for students to practice reflective judgment and problem-solving in dynamic contexts.

Moreover, a study by Nguyen (2022) highlighted that adaptability and critical reasoning are shaped through experiential learning, where students encounter real workplace constraints and are encouraged to analyze and resolve issues autonomously. These findings support the present study's results by affirming that limited exposure to adaptive, problem-oriented tasks during training restricts graduates' ability to respond efficiently in real-world automotive environments.

Theme 3: Leadership and time management skills require improvement

The third theme revealed that leadership and time management remain underdeveloped among Automotive TVL graduates. Based on the participants, many believed that graduates tend to follow rather than take initiative, often relying on supervisors to organize tasks or manage workflow. This lack of leadership is compounded by poor time management, as some graduates struggle to prioritize tasks, meet deadlines, or balance multiple responsibilities. Industry partners linked these weaknesses to limited opportunities for assuming leadership roles during training and insufficient emphasis on organizational and planning skills. Effective leadership and time management are critical in ensuring workplace efficiency, particularly in fast-paced automotive environments that demand both autonomy and accountability. Below are some responses from the participants.

“They can perform tasks well, but they usually wait for someone to lead before moving.” (FGD, P5)

“Some trainees have difficulty managing their time — they tend to focus on one task and forget others.” (IDI, P7)

“They rarely volunteer to lead small teams or projects; they’re used to just following instructions.” (FGD, P6)

“When given multiple tasks, they seem unsure how to prioritize which one to finish first.” (IDI, P8)

“They need more discipline when it comes to meeting deadlines; they often underestimate how long a job takes.” (FGD, P7)

In support of this theme, current studies highlight leadership and time management as core employability skills that enhance individual accountability and organizational success. According to Kumar (2023), graduates who demonstrate effective leadership and time management are more adaptable, efficient, and capable of guiding peers in achieving collective goals. Similarly, Yeo (2021) observed that many vocational graduates underperform in leadership contexts because training programs rarely provide structured opportunities to practice decision-making, delegation, and task organization.

Additionally, research shows that integrating leadership and self-management training into technical curricula leads to improved productivity and workplace confidence (Mendoza, 2022). These studies support the result of the present research by emphasizing that cultivating leadership and time management among TVL graduates is essential in preparing them to meet industry expectations and perform competently in collaborative and autonomous work settings.

Enhancing Training Programs to Align with Automotive Industry Expectations

Findings from industry feedback revealed a strong call for the realignment of training programs to better match the practical realities of the automotive sector. The themes that emerged underscore the importance of creating a more dynamic, responsive, and skills-based learning environment that bridges the gap between school preparation and employment readiness.

Table 3. Enhancing Training Programs to Align with Automotive Industry Expectations

Issues Probe	Codes / Category	Significant Statements	Themes	Meanings
Practical readiness gaps	Limited application; lack industry exposure; low confidence	theory– practice gap; real projects help; industry immersion builds confidence; real tools exposure; decision confidence cannot explain process; teamwork lacking; need collaboration training; freeze in teams; discussion limits problem-solving regular meetings; joint modules; feedback loops; better preparation; faster adaptation	Strengthen hands-on and industry-based training	Practical exposure improves readiness
Workplace skill deficits	Weak communication; poor teamwork; limited interaction	lacking; need collaboration training; freeze in teams; discussion limits problem-solving regular meetings; joint modules; feedback loops; better preparation; faster adaptation	Integrate soft skills development into the curriculum	Soft skills support performance
Curriculum alignment needs	Limited feedback; weak partnerships; outdated training	joint modules; feedback loops; better preparation; faster adaptation	Foster sustained collaboration and feedback between schools and industry	Collaboration ensures relevance

Theme 1: Strengthen hands-on and industry-based training

The first theme revealed that hands-on experience and direct exposure to the industry are crucial for preparing graduates for workplace demands. Based on the participants, many believed that while theoretical knowledge forms a strong foundation, graduates often struggle to apply it practically without guidance in real-world contexts. Industry partners noted that simulated tasks in school settings can only partially replicate workplace conditions, and direct industry-based experiences help learners develop problem-solving skills, adapt to workflow pressures, and gain confidence in performing complex tasks. The emphasis on practical, supervised learning reflects the need to bridge the gap between knowledge and application, ensuring graduates are ready to meet the expectations of automotive employers. Below are some responses from the participants.

“Graduates know the theory, but they hesitate when asked to apply it in real workshops.” (IDI, P1)

“Hands-on training in the actual industry setting really shows who can perform independently.” (FGD, P1)

“They improve significantly when given real projects rather than classroom exercises.” (IDI, P2)

“Simulated practice helps, but nothing prepares them like working with real tools and clients.” (FGD, P2)

“When trainees join internships or industry rotations, they become more confident in decision-making.” (IDI, P3)

In support of this result, recent studies emphasize that experiential learning significantly improves both technical proficiency and workplace readiness among vocational students. According to Alam (2022), integrating hands-on, industry-based training allows learners to apply theoretical knowledge in authentic contexts, fostering skill retention and problem-solving competence. Similarly, Romero (2021) noted that graduates who participate in supervised practical experiences demonstrate higher confidence and adaptability when transitioning to full-time work.

Moreover, research highlights that industry immersion not only enhances technical abilities but also facilitates exposure to professional standards and expectations, bridging the school-to-work transition effectively (Perez, 2023). These findings support the current study by showing that practical, workplace-oriented learning is a vital component in enhancing employability skills among Automotive TVL graduates.

Theme 2: Integrate soft skills development into the curriculum

The second theme emphasized the importance of incorporating soft skills training alongside technical instruction. Based on the participants, many believed that while graduates can perform specific technical tasks, their performance is often limited by weak communication, teamwork, and interpersonal skills. Employers highlighted that these competencies are essential for navigating collaborative projects, interacting with clients,

and responding to dynamic workplace scenarios. Integrating soft skills into the curriculum ensures that learners are not only technically competent but also capable of functioning effectively in professional and social contexts. Below are some responses from the participants.

“Technical knowledge is there, but graduates struggle to explain their process clearly to team members.” (FGD, P3)

“Soft skills like communication and teamwork are lacking, which affects productivity.” (IDI, P4)

“They need workshops or modules on collaboration and customer interaction.” (IDI, P5)

“When placed in teams, some students freeze or avoid contributing.” (FGD, P4)

“Problem-solving is affected because they can’t discuss ideas or solutions effectively.” (IDI, P6)

In support of this finding, studies highlight that soft skills are critical for workplace success, complementing technical expertise. According to Tan and Ramos (2022), integrating communication, collaboration, and problem-solving training into technical programs strengthens employability and workplace adaptability. Similarly, Atilola (2021) argued that vocational graduates who develop both technical and interpersonal competencies are more likely to succeed in dynamic industry environments.

Furthermore, research shows that structured soft skills programs embedded in technical education enhance learners’ confidence, teamwork abilities, and professional interactions (Lopez, 2023). These findings support the present study, indicating that deliberate soft skills integration is essential to producing graduates who can meet industry expectations comprehensively.

Theme 3: Foster sustained collaboration and feedback between schools and industry

The third theme highlighted the need for continuous collaboration between educational institutions and industry partners. Based on the participants, many believed that ongoing feedback, curriculum alignment, and joint program development are crucial for ensuring that graduates acquire the skills most valued by employers. Collaboration allows schools to adjust training content in response to changing industry demands, while employers gain assurance that graduates are prepared for the workforce. This dynamic exchange ensures that both technical and soft skills development are relevant and timely, creating a responsive training environment that reduces the gap between classroom instruction and workplace requirements. Below are some responses from the participants.

“Regular meetings with schools help us communicate what skills are currently needed.” (FGD, P5)

“Jointly developed modules ensure students learn what’s actually used in the industry.” (IDI, P7)

“Feedback loops allow schools to adjust their lessons and improve training quality.” (IDI, P8)

“When schools and employers coordinate, graduates are more prepared for real work scenarios.” (FGD, P6)

“Partnerships ensure students understand expectations and adapt faster to workplace culture.” (FGD, P7)

In support of this theme, recent research shows that sustained school-industry collaboration improves the relevance and quality of vocational training. Kumar (2023) emphasized that partnerships between educational institutions and employers ensure graduates acquire skills aligned with labor market demands, leading to higher employability. Similarly, Yeo (2021) noted that feedback mechanisms and co-developed training programs help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and workplace expectations.

Additionally, studies indicate that collaborative approaches foster continuous curriculum improvement and create opportunities for authentic learning experiences (Mendoza, 2022). These findings support the results of the present study, reinforcing the idea that structured collaboration between schools and industry is essential to produce job-ready Automotive TVL graduates.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The findings of this study highlight key implications for technical-vocational education and the automotive industry. Results emphasize the need to strengthen hands-on and industry-based training to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. While graduates demonstrate solid technical foundations, limited practical exposure affects their workplace readiness.
2. The study also underscores the importance of integrating soft skills development into technical curricula, particularly communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are essential for effective workplace performance and employability.
3. Finally, sustained collaboration between schools and industry partners is crucial to ensure curriculum relevance and responsiveness to evolving industry demands. Continuous feedback and joint program development support the preparation of graduates who are not only technically competent but also adaptable and professionally prepared for the automotive workforce.

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