

THE EXPERIENCES OF NATIONAL CERTIFICATE PASSERS IN TAKING THE TESDA ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

National Certificate passers encountered numerous challenges in taking the Technical Education and Skills Development Assessment. In taking the assessment, passers gained experiences and developed knowledge, skills, and attitudes to pass the assessment. Herewith, this study aimed to explore the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights gained by the National Certificate passers in taking the TESDA assessment. There were 6 identified participants: 4 passers of Bookkeeping NC 3 and 2 passers of Computer System Servicing NC 2 of Assumption College of Nabunturan. This qualitative research made use of a phenomenological research design since this research method was most effective in capturing the lived experiences of NC passers who take the TESDA assessment. The results of the study showed that difficulty in taking the assessment, time management, problems in online classes, and anxiety were the common problems of the NC passers. The findings would benefit other adult learners, instructors, administrators, and future researchers by allowing them to use the information to address the experiences of NC passers in taking TESDA assessments.

Keywords: - Experiences, coping mechanisms, challenges, insight gain, national certificate, phenomenological research, Davao, Philippines

1. INTRODUCTION

TESDA was established in 1994 to improve the technical capabilities of its trainees and assess and certify the competencies of middle-level skilled workers through the Philippine TVET Competency Assessment. The TVET program prepares individuals for the world of work. It has played an essential role in giving young people and adults the information, skills, and competencies they need to live better lives (Maclean, 2006).

National Certificate passers experiencing the TESDA assessment often encounter challenges that can impact their assessment experience. One of the challenges is the complexity of the assessment process, which demands a thorough demonstration of knowledge and skills. Complex assessments can be daunting, especially for students with limited access to study materials, time constraints, study commitments, and lack of preparation for the assessment.

In South Africa, the study conducted by Mohan (2022) identified four significant challenges faced by adult learners earning a National Certificate on Vocational (NCV) program in a TVET college located in the Thukela District of KwaZulu-Natal province. These challenges include financial constraints due to late scholarship payments, learning styles, academic challenges, and family responsibilities. The participants of the study are 18 years old and older. These students primarily reside in a rural area, either doing part-time jobs or unemployed, either unmarried or a single parent and all relied on the scholarship by National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). The background of the students and the challenges they faced led to understanding the effects of these challenges on the students. It emerged that students have resorted to absenteeism, loss of concentration in class, and lack of academic motivation.

In the national setting, Roziel Nabuya et al. (2019) conducted a study on the Grade 12 students' experiences taking the assessment and how it affects their learning in their Home Economics/Cookery (H.E) strand under the Technical Vocational Livelihood program of the Senior High School at the University of the Immaculate Conception, Bonifacio Street, Davao City, Philippines. The study shows that the students' assessments were done by group. This method encourages students to collaborate in learning. Thus, the students were reportedly experiencing an increase in social skills necessary to work cooperatively, functioning as team members, and acknowledging responsibility for individual and group learning. However, the study also highlighted the negative impact of this method on the students' learning. Students tend to depend more on their groupmates, which might also lead them to have personal pressure in fear of dragging the group down. The students have a lack of control over their learning as tasks are divided in the group, and they also have no control over their grades, potentially impacting their future. The students must also deal with group clashes due to different preferences.

In Assumption College of Nabunturan, students in ABM and TVL strands also experienced taking the TESDA NC II Assessment. Some had difficulties taking it due to the unexpected changes in the assessment coverage and curriculum. To remediate this, the school provided teachers with the necessary expertise to give input and tutorials to the students. However, many still failed the assessment. Other students were observed to lack the competencies needed to pass the exam. Thus, this study is conceptualized to explore the experiences and challenges of the students in TESDA assessment.

This phenomenological study aimed to explore the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights of national assessment passers who took TESDA assessments at the Senior High School of Assumption College of Nabunturan, Nabunturan Davao de Oro. The research employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to determine and assess some difficulties encountered by the senior high school students and how they coped with and find solutions to this crisis. In-depth interviews were done to gather some information about the challenges met and coping mechanisms by the NC passers to resolve the issues and identify their strengths and weaknesses for future endeavors.

1.1 Research Questions

The study aimed to explore the experiences of NC Passers in taking TESDA assessment. It was guided by the following questions.

1. What are the experiences of the participants in taking the TESDA Assessment?
2. What are the challenges experienced by the participants in taking the TESDA Assessment?
3. How do the participants cope with the challenges that they experience in taking the assessment?
4. What are the significant insights that the participants gain from the experiences?
5. What are the suggestions that the informants can give to other examiners of the TESDA Assessment?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study was a qualitative phenomenological study to explore passer's experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, insight gained in taking TESDA assessment. An in-depth interview was primarily employed to 6 research participants eliciting their responses and perspectives on the comprehension and experiences about in taking TESDA assessment. Moreover, participants were identified using purposive sampling.

Qualitative research studies allow the researchers to explore the phenomenon from an individual's personal experiences in varying situations and circumstances (Bhamani et al., 2020). According to Creswell (2013) phenomenology is an approach to quantitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group.

The benefit of employing the in-depth interview on this research is that it gave the researcher the opportunity to learn and probe the perspectives of the research participants. In addition, in-depth interview was helpful in getting deeper pieces of information relevant to the study.

2.2 Research Participants

The participants of this study were the 6 students who are NC Passers taking the TESDA assessment. They were chosen using the purposive sampling method. As described by Guetterman (2015), purposive sampling is the deliberate choice of participants based on the qualities the participants possess. The purposive sampling used in this study was characterized by the incorporation of inclusion criteria to be met by the participants, which were the following: the participant must be a student of ACN, an NC 2 of NC 3 passer, and willing to participate in the study.

2.4 Data Analysis

In the context of this study, the thematic analysis was done after the initial codes were identified. Then, categorizing and analyzing all the responses of the participants from general to specific followed. Responses with similar core ideas were extracted and grouped to formulate comprehensive themes. For a theme to be valid, it must consist of at least five core ideas. Furthermore, in this study, the researcher assigned code names for each of the participants to ensure anonymity.

3. RESULT, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Experiences of NC passers in taking the TESDA Assessment

Two emerging themes were identified from the informants' responses on their experiences taking TESDA assessments. These themes were difficulty in taking the assessment and problems with online classes. One emerging theme was the way to prepare for the assessment, like practice. Additionally, two emerging themes were the advantages of taking the assessment, like job opportunities and knowledge.

Difficulty in taking TESDA assessments. This theme revealed that the difficulty of taking a TESDA assessment is one of the everyday experiences of NC passersby. Some participants experience everyday practice to familiarize themselves with what they need to accomplish. Aside from that, their experience with curriculum misalignment during practice discussions and assessment test packages is different. According to Odu (2011), the difficulties of students face in the TVET system include insufficient funding, poor workshop preparation, curriculum misalignment and inadequate instructional materials. In line with Okebukola (2012), among the difficulties students faced while mastering the necessary skills were insufficient trainers, lousy money, obscenely inadequate facilities, harsh and unattractive training rooms, unhealthy classrooms, a lack of equipment, and social vices.

Problems with online classes. This theme revealed that the problem in online classes is one of the common experiences of NC passers in taking TESDA assessments. For the participants, during the pandemic, there is a lack of face-to-face interactions with the teachers and classmates, making it difficult to ask questions and engage in discussions. In addition, technical difficulties like internet connectivity problems with learning management system can disrupt the learning process. Staying motivated and focused when studying from home is complex, with disturbances around and less structure than in traditional settings. According to Arkorful et al. (2015), their study found that e-learning can often be conducted in a remote and contemplative way, which leads to a lack of student participation compared to traditional face-to-face learning. E-learning may be less effective since it lacks student and teacher interaction. In line with this, (Islam et al., 2015) mentioned that the absence of essential face-to-face interactions is the most noticeable drawback of e-learning, not only among the learners but also between students and teachers. In online learning, there is not much of a sense of community as student-to-student is much less of a concern when compared with student-to-teacher interaction.

Practice in preparing for the Assessment. This theme revealed that practice in preparing for the assessments significant. For my participants, it is necessary to prepare for the TESDA assessment; it needs to focus on practice and familiarization with the assessment process. Understanding the specific requirements and procedures involved in the assessment will greatly aid in the preparation. In Technical vocational education term practice is significant. Practice in preparing for the TESDA Assessment is crucial because it is to focus on practice and familiarization with the assessment process. According to Butron (2011), accurate assessment is a set of assessments that connects knowledge

with direct practice. Technical vocational education aims to develop exceedingly skilled talent to meet market needs; practice is vital in adopting students' practical skills in the classroom.

Job opportunities. This theme revealed in taking the TESDA assessment can significantly impact job opportunities. For my participants, obtaining National Certification can enhance their career advancement prospects. This certification opens doors to higher-level positions within your profession. It provides avenues for personal development by continuously improving your skills, expanding your knowledge, and staying updated with industry standards. According to Paryano (2017) mentioned, TVET institutions are significant 'workplace suppliers.' 'Who will be in the workforce and at the frontline of dealing directly with sustainability concerns. Furthermore, Maclean (2006) states that the TVET program prepares individuals for the world of work. It has played an essential role in giving young people and adults the information, skills, and competencies they need to live a better life.

Gaining Knowledge. This theme revealed that for my participants, gaining knowledge for passing the TESDA assessment involves understanding the specific skills, competencies, and attitudes/values required for competent performance in your chosen field. Acquiring this knowledge enhances the ability to excel in the assessment process and increases their chances of successfully passing. According to Wimer (2000), the purpose of vocational education for students is to develop the skills, abilities, understanding attitudes, work routines, and appreciation of knowledge and information necessary for workers to initiate and advance in employment on a productive and helpful basis. It contributes to the development of decent citizens by fostering their physical, social, civic, cultural, and economic skills. Education must instill in students the competence and self-assurance they need to see change not as a threat but as a possible opportunity. Technical and vocational education and training involve instruction, skills development, and training in various domains, including production, services, employment opportunities, and livelihoods.

3.2 Challenges experienced by the participants in taking the TESDA Assessment?

The emerging themes were generated from participants' responses to the second research question regarding the difficulties encountered in taking the TESDA assessment: difficulties in time management and difficulties in asking for help from instructors. One emerging theme identified from the responses was the most notable challenging experiences, such as challenges in taking exams. Lastly, on ways the Difficulties Affect One is Performance in the Assessment, their responses extracted two themes, like difficulty in achieving the task and motivation to study harder.

Difficulties in time management. This theme revealed difficulties in time; for my participants, time is a continuous process encompassing individuals' influence, extending from the past to the future success of events that will occur today. Time is a valuable resource that must be utilized carefully; it should not be wasted. Time management is vital the main of self-management. According to Lawrence et al (2016, p. 205) asserted that "Time management is self-management, or a control of oneself to manage time-consuming activities more effectively." Structuring, developing a to-do list, overcoming procrastination, and developing time management techniques for effective time use. Time management aims to increase the quality of the activities being undertaken within a limited time. Students who have poor time management are prone to wasting their valuable time, which can result in useless tasks. As mentioned by Hickerson et al., 2007 state that students who lack the ability to manage their leisure time are more likely to spend their valuable time on worthless tasks.

Difficulties asking for help from instructor. This theme revealed that difficulties asking for help from instructors, for my participants, it is difficult to ask for help especially in online class. These difficulties can include communication barriers that lead to misunderstandings. Aside from that, technical difficulties like poor internet connections or difficulties in using online platforms can hold back students from reaching out for help, and the absence of personal interaction in online classrooms may make it hinder a student to asking for help from their instructor for assistance. According to Arkorful et al., (2015), their study found that online classes can often be conducted in a remote and contemplative way, which leads to a lack of student participation. Compared to traditional face-to-face learning. Online classes may be less effective since they lack student and teacher interaction. In line with this, (Islam et al., 2015) mentioned that the absence of essential face-to-face interactions is the most noticeable drawback of online classes, not only among the learners but also between students and teachers. In online learning, there is not much of a sense of community as student-to-student is much less of a concern when compared with student-to-teacher interaction.

Challenges in taking exam. This theme revealed notable challenges in taking the exam; for my participants, During the assessment, the informant taking the exam during the assessment can be quite a challenging experience due to the time constraints and pressure that can contribute to a high level of anxiety. It is important to the student practice such as self- management, deep breathing , relax, and positive self-talk as well as the student needs to apply and recall a wide range of information correctly within a limited time frame can be put off.

One of the most important skills of the students needed to succeed during the assessment is the ability to self-manage. Self- management is one of the most vital skills that are required for success in today's challenging world. As mentioned by Dembo (2004) stated that the capacity to manage one's own time and task is crucial for success. Having this skill is vital in all areas of life, particularly their learning. Self-management is recognized as one of the five socio-emotional areas of learning by the collaboration for academic, social, and emotional learning, as stated by Bandy et al, (2010).

Difficulties in achieving the task. This theme revealed in difficulty in achieving the task, for my participants, The difficulty in achieving the task can have a big impact on informant's performance in the assessment. When the task is difficult, they may face problems in completing the task as well as the students lack of understanding on examination, the time constraints, distractions, and anxiety can cause roadblocks to the students from effectively completing the task required in the assessment.

Motivated to study harder. This theme revealed in motivates to study harder, for my participants, being motivated to study harder have a significant impact on informant performance in the assessment. When they empowered and dedicated to the studies, it can lead to a deeper understanding, and they are focus to grasp the assessment better and they are prepared when it comes the time to taking the assessment.

Motivation, the ability to motivate, to manage to establish goals, as well as to set actions and develop motivation are all keywords in getting things done. Motivation is one of the areas in self- management, As mentioned by Zimmerman (2013), motivation, behavior and learning and study strategies are the three areas of self-management that individuals should consider if they wish to succeed. Motivated to study harder refer refers to the ability to maintain a positive mental attitude, self-discipline and time management. As stated by Choi et al(2012), the motivated to study harder relate to learners' ability to maximize their time to get the best out of their study.

3.3 Cope with the challenges experienced in taking the assessment

The responses extracted two themes such as have self-confidence; time management themes were generated from participants' responses to the structured themes regarding in mechanism used to cope with the challenges. On the other hand, on ways these mechanisms helped oneself in passing the assessment. The responses of the informants extracted two themes like able to apply techniques, helped gain confidence.

Self-confidence. This theme revealed in having self- confidence, for my participants, the students must believe their capabilities, it can help for them to stay calm and focused during the assessment. It is important for the students to trust and well prepared for the assessment. Self – confidence is a positive belief in one's abilities, skills and judgment. It is the assurance in the capacity to achieve success, cope with challenges, and handle difficult situations. As stated by Norman et al, (2003) confidence plays a role in learning and can impact students' engagement and progress. When a student have self-confidence, they are confident in their skills, they are able to establish goals for themselves and they work hard to reach those objectives without worrying about the outcomes, as stated by Welford (2013) Self – confidence is essential for a student to have for them to take chances and to pass the assessment.

Time management. This theme revealed in time management, for my participants, Effective time management is crucial during an assessment. To complete an assessment within the allotted time, NC-passing candidates frequently create schedules, assign specific time slots for distinct tasks, and prioritize their activities. It helps the feeling of being overburdened. The students to become more aware for this, the student must conduct a self-survey analysis of their time usage, which involves assessing the use of time and time wasters.

To undertake more effectively planning activities, manage time, the capacity to identify the time wasters would be essential. The student must build consistent study schedules, the compilation of a list of tasks aside from that the student needs to establish weekly priority schedule and so on. Lawrence et al, (2016, p. 205) asserted, "Time management is self-management, or a control of oneself to manage time-consuming activities more effectively." Structuring, developing a to-do list, overcoming procrastination, and developing time management techniques for effective time use. Time management aims to increase the quality of the activities undertaken within a limited time.

Able to apply techniques. This theme revealed in are able to apply the techniques, for my participants, it needs to apply various techniques like pre assessments, seeking guidance from others and the teacher, self -assessment and maintaining a positive mindset throughout the process. Applying techniques, of what have learned it have a big chance to pass the assessment. Students who take the TESDA assessment must have coping mechanisms to pass the assessment. First, best-coping strategies they must prepare before the Assessment; Students often prepare by studying or attending a review class and developing good study habits. The initial step in alleviating apprehension and cultivating self-assurance is comprehensively comprehending the assessment material. As mentioned by Monday (2008), poor study habits argue that students may improve their performance by establishing and maintaining healthy study routines, and they can pass the assessment, and as stated by Boiling (2000), a sound study habit through planning helps students prepare for the future and achieve their objectives.

Help gain confidence. This theme revealed in helping gain confidence, for my participants, engaging with friends who are also preparing for the TESDA assessment can create a sense of teamwork and collective motivation. Aside from this, sharing about the lessons, discussing challenging topics can produce positive environment that fosters confidence.

According to Johnson (2002, 2013) stated that there are five elements necessary to maximize collaboration with others. First is positive interdependence, it means the perception of linkages to other group members and psychological realization that is achieved through the pursuit of mutual goals. Second is individual accountability in which each group member is accountable for his/her share of the work and has a willingness to help other group members. Third is face-to-face promotive interaction where group members foster each other's efforts through discussions and explanations and their willingness to throw in their lot with their peers. Fourth is Interpersonal and small group skills, which boost the trust among group members, improve their communication skills, and quickly resolve conflicts when differences arise. Fifth is Group processing, which involves group members discussing and assessing their work; this is vital for promoting, affirming, and maintaining effective working relationships among members.

3.4 Significant insights from the experiences

Two themes were generated from the responses of participants to the fourth research question regarding the significance insight that the participants gain from the experiences such as having certificates, prepare oneself. Moreover, two themes regarding to the reflections in these experiences like need to motivate oneself, the importance to take the assessment.

Having Certificates. This theme revealed having certificates, for my participants, The passers-by who have NC or national Certificate Assessment it serves as concrete proof of successful completion of the Assessment, it demonstrates, it demonstrates the competence in all required units of competency for a particular qualification. This recognition enhances the individual attractiveness to the employer, increasing the employment opportunities. In addition, National certification opens doors to career advancement. Successful completion of TVET programs guarantees trainees a National Certificate from TVET Assessment, which provides several benefits, including quality assurance that the graduate has acquired the necessary knowledge and skills through practical and hands-on demonstrations. Additionally, interviews with industry professionals and work projects contribute to developing positive attitudes toward the job.

As stated by UNESCO (2015,) education is regarded as a secondary concern compared to other immediate requirements, such as optimizing household income. As mentioned by Fraser et al., (2014). In addition, the certificate assures that the recipient has assimilated the requisite principles that can enhance their proficiency in the relevant profession and potential prospects that may arise from the triumph of the present undertaking.

Prepare oneself. This theme revealed that in preparing oneself for my participants, it must have self-management to structured study plan that outlines the topics and prioritizes the physical and mental well-being, as well as take practice exams to simulate exam conditions like assessing the knowledge and also practice time management skills during the study and on the actual assessment day.

According to Choi et al. (2012), the expansion of self-management skills is a method that tends to be effective for students who may lose confidence in their ability to flourish and tend to blame external circumstances for their performance. This is because students who have this tendency tend to blame external circumstances for their performance. In line with this the students who are improving self- managements skills in learning is vital in improving

student success. In addition, Chudari (2017) highlights the role of self-management in transforming negative habits into positive emotional states and excellent behavior. Self-management is a one way for preparing the self of the students, and having this skill is vital in all areas of life, particularly their learning.

Need to motivate oneself. This theme revealed the need to motivate oneself for my participants. Motivation can renew and direct students' behavior, leading them to work harder and achieve better results. According to Omidvar et al, (2013) motivation is the learners inner drive to learn, improve their skills and academic achievement. In addition, (Elliot, et al., 2017) mentioned that motivation could be equated to the interest of an individual student to engage in the learning experience. Students who possess great motivation are expected to put in more effort to increase their academic and social achievement in their learning process.

Importance of taking the Assessment. This theme revealed on the importance of taking the Assessment, for my participants, assessment play a significant role in education by gauging the progress, identifying the strengths and weaknesses, enabling growth, enhancing the learning experience and preparing the students for real world challenges. This examination provides a thorough evaluation of competencies that meet industry standards and needs, opening doors to a variety of career paths. NC passers demonstrate their technical proficiency through this procedure, but they also reflect on their educational experience, pave the route for wise career decisions, and engage in lifelong learning.

As mentioned (Hui et al., 2015), Through TVET, students acquire knowledge and technical and vocational skills to make them work-ready and engage in lifelong learning. More precisely, it talks about what society expects of young people and the employability of adults. Additionally, it gives those from lower socioeconomic groups more opportunities for higher education, professional growth, and social mobility (de Oliveira Silva et al., 2019).

3.5 Suggestions to other examiners of the TESDA Assessment

The responses extracted two themes such as practice a lot and study themes were generated from the participants' responses to the research question regarding suggestions to other students who will take before the assessment. On the other hand, on suggestions to other students who will take during the assessment. The responses of the informants extracted two themes like do not be nervous and be focused. Lastly, on suggestions to other students who will take after the assessment. Their responses extracted two themes that correspond to the suggestions to other students who will take after the assessment these themes were knowledge gained and use the certificates.

Practice a lot. This theme revealed the practice a lot, for my participants, devoting time to practice and improve the skills and ensuring that the students are well- prepared to show the abilities during the assessment. Consistent practice allows students to strengthen their knowledge, mold their skills, perform what is best, and focus during the assessment. Practice in preparing for the TESDA Assessment is crucial because it is to focus on practice and familiarization with the assessment process. As stated by Butron (2011), real assessment is a set of assessments that connects knowledge with direct practice. Technical vocational education aims to develop greatly skilled talent to meet market needs; practice is a key point of adopting students' practical skills in the classroom.

Study. This theme is revealed in Suggestions to Other Students Who Will Take Before the Assessment; for my participants, effectively preparing before the assessment by reviewing the course materials, practicing the problems, and consolidating information can improve their understanding and retention of the Assessment. Studying before taking an Assessment helps to feel more confident, reduces test anxiety, and develops performance on the examination.

Students often prepare by studying or attending a review class and developing good study habits. The initial step in alleviating apprehension and cultivating self-assurance is comprehensively comprehending the assessment material. As Monday (2008) mentioned, study habits claim that students may improve their performance by establishing and maintaining healthy study routines and can pass the assessment. As stated by Boiling (2000), a sound study habit through planning helps students prepare for the future and achieve their objectives.

Do not be nervous. This theme revealed not to be nervous for my participants, it is normal to feel nervous during assessment, it should always remember the knowledge, skills and preparation is enough to overcome the nervous. During the assessment, accept the challenges with calmness.

Be focused. This theme revealed on Suggestions to Other Students Who Will Take during the Assessment, for my participants focused during an assessment entail directing the full attention and concentration towards the assessment without allowing distractions to interfere. Maintaining focus during the assessment is essential for optimizing performance, showcasing skills, and achieving successful outcomes. Positive self-talk and self-management are essential in boosting confidence and combating assessment nervousness. As Winsler et al. (2007) mentioned, Self-talk is a powerful instrument widely acknowledged as a means of moderating thought and behavior. Hatzigeorgiadis et al. (2011) mentioned that positive self-talk means changing negative thoughts and self-doubt with positive statements that make people feel better about their confidence and self-belief. In addition, about the self-management, as stated by Choi et al. (2012), the expansion of self-management skills is a method that tends to be effective for students who may lose confidence in their ability to flourish and tend to blame external circumstances for their performance.

Keep the knowledge gained. This theme was revealed to keep the knowledge gained for my participants. It means that keeping the knowledge gained after an assessment refers to retaining and applying the knowledge, skills, and insights acquired during the assessment process; aside from that, the students can continue to build upon their knowledge and become experts in their field. According to Ellis, J. 2003, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the path to developing professional knowledge and abilities that make it easier to go from theory to practice. Students can focus solely on training for a career, which is a significant advantage of a TVET, which also allows students to focus exclusively on training for a job. Through the help of TVET, our students develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and work practices that benefit the individual to meet their social, political, and economic requirements following their characteristics. As mentioned by Zaib et al. (2014), vocational education and training is an educational approach that emphasizes the industry's requirements so that individuals can advance and develop. As stated by Thompson (2002), vocational education's goal is to create human abilities in knowledge, skills, and comprehension so that an individual can effectively engage in the activities of his chosen vocation.

Use the certificates. This theme revealed in using the certificate for my participants, the national Certificate Assessment it serves as concrete proof of successful completion of the Assessment, it demonstrates the competence in all required units of competency for a particular qualification. This recognition enhances the individual attractiveness to the employer, increasing the employment opportunities. Technical and vocational education and training involve instruction, skills development, and training in various domains, including production, services, employment opportunities, and livelihoods. In the view of Wimer (2000), the purpose of vocational education for students is to develop the skills, abilities, understanding attitudes, work routines, and appreciation of knowledge and information necessary for workers to initiate and advance in employment on a productive and helpful basis. It contributes to the development of decent citizens by fostering their physical, social, civic, cultural, and economic skills. As a result, technical and vocational education and training programs through National Certificates benefit to students by encouraging more excellent employment prospects. National certification opens doors to career advancement.

3.6 Implications for Practice

Based on the findings, the following implications for practice are offered.

On Experience in Taking the TESDA Assessment. The experience of passersby facing difficulties in taking the TESDA Assessment can be challenging. They experience difficulties, including their personal educational and environmental obstacles, that can affect their performance in the assessment. Based on the participants' experience, they are facing a lack of access to adequate preparation, limited study materials, and insufficient guidance. Therefore, the teacher, the training institutions, and TESDA could emphasize the importance of reviewing the test materials, staying calm during the assessment process, and managing time effectively; aside from that, highlighting the importance of knowledge application and practical skills could be helpful preparing for the assessment and also the teacher, the training institutions, and TESDA help mitigate these experiences and challenges to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all trainees, and addressing these difficulties can contribute to improving the assessment experiences of the trainees undergoing the TESDA assessment.

On Ways in Preparing for the Assessment. To pass the assessment, the student needs to take action to prepare everything for the assessment and comprehensive review of the knowledge and skill for the specific required competencies. Hence, the students should emphasize the following recommendations: First, the students should give sufficient time to review the materials, practice, and evaluate any areas of weakness. Second, it is important to create a study timetable, break down the material into specific sections, and allot time for studying each day because it will help prevent last-minute cramming. Third, studying independently or forming study with groups can be incredibly beneficial. Discussing the materials or the lesson

with the groups strengthens the learning and provides different insights that may not have been considered on your own. Lastly, seek guidance from the teachers and mentors if you encounter difficulties with specific topics. Do not be reluctant to ask for help when needed.

On Advantages in Taking the Assessment. The TESDA assessment offers a variety of advantages for students seeking to validate their knowledge and skills in different technical and vocational fields. In taking the TESDA assessment, I highlighted how this assessment process can positively impact individuals seeking to enhance their career prospects and professional development. Therefore, the student who enrolls in the SHS TVL track or TVET training institutions should take the assessment because the TESDA assessment is the opportunity to acquire national certification. National certification is highly recommended in the Philippines and abroad, providing passers-by with credentials that validate their competency in a specific vocational skill. This National Certificate can boost job prospects, career development opportunities, and credibility in the industry. Furthermore, the TESDA assessment provides a formal mechanism to assess and certify the competencies. Through this, it can be important to showcase one expertise to potential employers.

On Mechanism Used to Cope with Challenges. In taking the TESDA assessment, the trainees can encounter various challenges that require resilience, determination, and effective coping strategies. Therefore, the student should navigate the challenges in TESDA assessments to require effective coping mechanisms to overcome the obstacles that may arise during the assessment. The student must prioritize accurate preparation, time management, maintaining a positive mindset, and seeking support from peers and mentors; these are valuable insights and resources to optimize the assessment preparation. By this coping mechanism, it will enhance the performance of the students.

On Suggestions to Other Students Who Will Take Before the Assessment. Before the assessment, the student should start studying the lesson in advance. Create a study schedule that allows the student to cover all the materials without cramming. Practice during pre-assessment to familiarize yourself with the format of the assessment.

On Suggestions to Other Students Who Will Take during the Assessment. The student should stay calm during the assessment and manage their time effectively. Start with the most straightforward questions to build confidence before tackling more challenging ones. Remember that you should prioritize yourself and allocate time for each section or question.

On Suggestions to Other Students Who Will Take after the Assessment. After the assessment, the student should take time to relax and pray to God for a successful assessment and avoid discussing the assessment in detail with their classmates to prevent unnecessary stress. What you will do is reflect on the performance and what area you can improve on in the future assessment. Review the assessment to understand the mistakes and learn from them.

3.7 Implications of Future Research

In as much as the study was limited to the responses of the students in Assumption College of Nabunturan, the following implications for future research are considered:

First, future research may be conducted by selecting other groups of NC passers students coming from the same school. Second, another research study with the same focus may be conducted in another location to investigate the same phenomenon in understanding bullying. Third, a re-interview of the same research participants and informants may be conducted to see whether their understanding of the experience of NC passers over a period of time.

Fourth, this study was done in the Assumption College of Nabunturan, a private school. Further research could be done to investigate the same phenomenon among public schools or public training institutions. Finally, the findings of the study are viewed from the lens of the selected NC passers—particularly the CSS and Bookkeeping research participants and informants. Further research could be conducted to find out the other areas of TESDA.

4. CONCLUSION

The study's focus was on the experiences of National certificate passers in taking TESDA assessments, but it also emphasized the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insight gained by NC passers. With these experiences, it is evident that the journey of these individuals goes beyond mere assessment success, and it becomes clear that National Certificate passers undergo a transformative process that confirms their skills and enhances their confidence, positivity, and

sense of accomplishment. The assessment experience is a key movement in their studies development, marking a significant journey towards becoming skilled professionals. Similarly, NC passers' experiences in taking TESDA assessments taught me the importance of hard work, perseverance, and the belief that no goal is beyond reach with dedication and determination.

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6. REFERENCES

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