Enhancing the Effectiveness of Vocational Education in Vietnam (EEVE)

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UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Project funding

- EEVE funded by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (Danida)

- FFU/DFC

- 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2024

- DKK 5.0 million

Project teams

- PI: Prof. Finn Tarp, University of Copenhagen
- Co-Is:
  - Dr. Smriti Sharma, Newcastle University, UK
  - Dr. Saurabh Singhal, Lancaster University, UK
  - Dr. Diego Ubfal, World Bank, USA
  - Dr. Lore Vandewalle, Graduate Institute Geneva, Switzerland
- Research assistant:
  - Mr. Doan Hai Ma

Project teams

Implementation partners in Vietnam:

- Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs (ILSSA) at the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA)
  - Dr. Dao Quang Vinh, (former Director General), Senior Researcher
  - Mr. Hoang Manh Cam, Researcher, Project Coordinator
  - Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tuan, Data Analyst
  - Dr. Bui Ton Hien, ILSSA Director, (ILSSA Director General), Researcher
  - Mr. Le Ngu Binh, (ILSSA Deputy Director General), Researcher
  - Ms. Nguyen Hai Ninh, Researcher
- NOVAEDU and Manpower Group

Motivation

- Results from 2018 pilot survey on 1,194 students from 21 colleges in Hanoi and 2020 survey on 69 key employers hiring fresh college graduates:
  - Vocational college students graduate without skills demanded in the labour market
  - Mismatch between students and available jobs/employers, leading to low rates of employment and job retention
- We conduct a randomized control trial (RCT) with vocational colleges in Hanoi
- Evaluate effectiveness of two interventions to address these problems and improve students' labour market prospects

Research questions

- Key research questions:
  i. Does provision of soft skills training to students improve job market outcomes?
  ii. Does provision of career counselling services to students improve job market outcomes?
  iii. Are soft skills and career counselling services complementary to each other in improving job market outcomes?

- Ethical approval from University of Copenhagen Ethics Board

- Trial pre-registered with the American Economic Association's RCT Registry

Expected outcomes

- **Improving labour market outcomes for vocational college students in Vietnam**
  - This is decisive goal of project, to be achieved by promoting evidence-based results of interventions designed in close collaboration with MoLISA and ILSSA

- **Advancing academic knowledge**
  - Feed into future academic pursuits on how to improve vocational education

- **Mutual learning and increased institutional capacities**
  - Strengthen capacities of ILSSA and UCPH-DERG to analyse issues related to vocational education, leading to policy changes with wide-ranging socioeconomic impact

- **Changing mindset of college students**
  - Necessity of soft-skills and career orientation for employment perspective

Study design

- Four randomly allocated treatment arms:
  - Treatment arm 1: soft skills training only
  - Treatment arm 2: career counselling only
  - Treatment arm 3: soft skills training + career counselling
  - Control arm: no soft skills training or career counselling offered
- Students randomly assigned to the training interventions
- All trainings offered free of charge to students

Soft skills training

- Service provider: NOVAEDU

- 7 group training sessions focusing on 3 broad skill groups:
  - Self-awareness skills (self-positioning, goal identification, positive thinking)
  - Emotional management skills
  - Social interaction skills (communication and presentation skills)

- Skills identified based on discussions with NOVAEDU and key employers hiring from vocational colleges

- All sessions conducted online via Zoom

Career counselling

- Service provider: Manpower Group Vietnam
- Group training sessions focusing on CV writing and interview preparation
- Individual coaching sessions for career orientation advising on career paths based on student's strengths and weaknesses, interest and motivation (through MBTI test results on personalities)
- All training offered by consultants with more than 5 years' experience in human resources, training and coaching
- All sessions conducted online via Zoom

Baseline survey

- Baseline survey conducted online
  - Sept-Oct 2021
- 154 majors/disciplines
  - Spread across 31 vocational colleges in Hanoi and Bac Ninh
- 3,352 students enrolled in the final year

Study sample: basic description
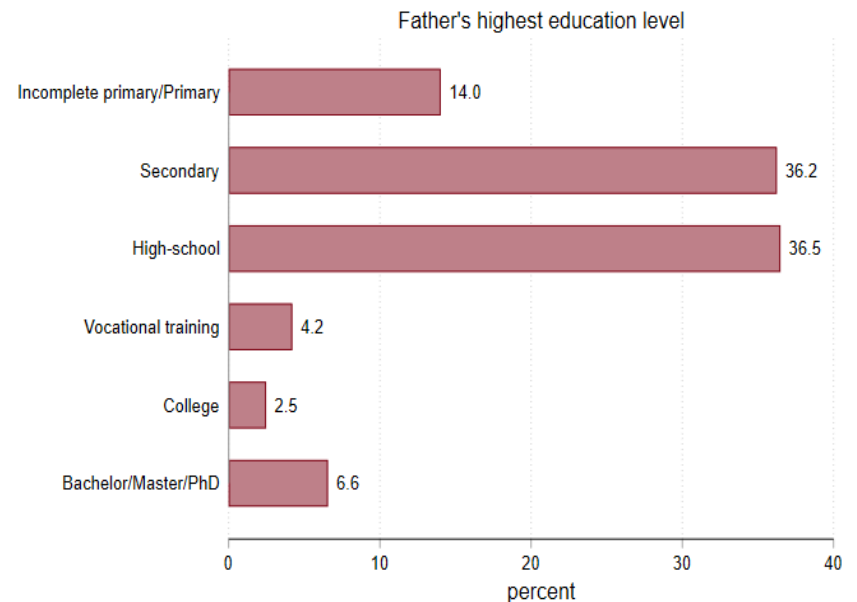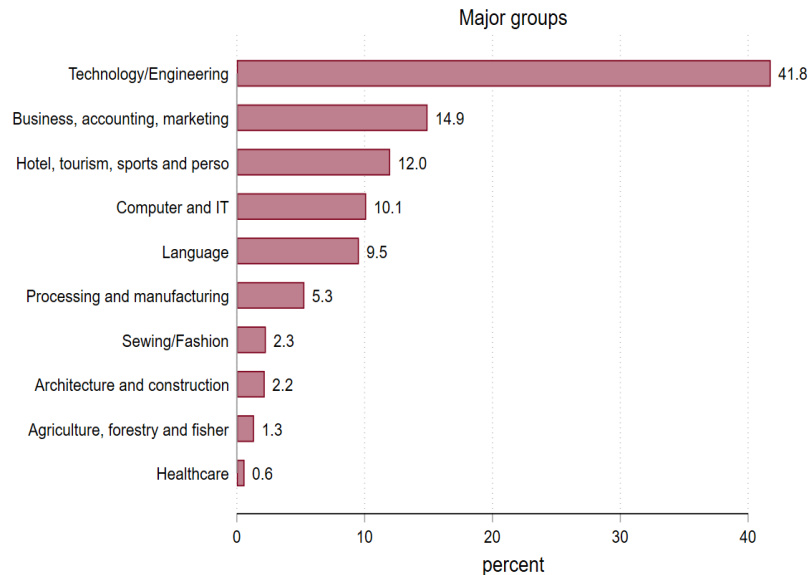
66.6%
Students are males

21
Average age of students

56.5%
Students are enrolled in 36-month majors

49.5%
Students are from Hanoi and Bac Ninh provinces

Technology/Engineering is the most common major group

Secondary and high schools are the most common education levels among parents

Major groups

Major group	percent
Technology/Engineering	41.8
Business, accounting, marketing	14.9
Hotel, tourism, sports and perso	12.0
Computer and IT	10.1
Language	9.5
Processing and manufacturing	5.3
Sewing/Fashion	2.3
Architecture and construction	2.2
Agriculture, forestry and fisher	1.3
Healthcare	0.6

Father's highest education level

Education level	percent
Incomplete primary/Primary	14.0
Secondary	36.2
High-school	36.5
Vocational training	4.2
College	2.5
Bachelor/Master/PhD	6.6

Key findings

Employment

45.4 % — **Completed an internship in the last 5 years**
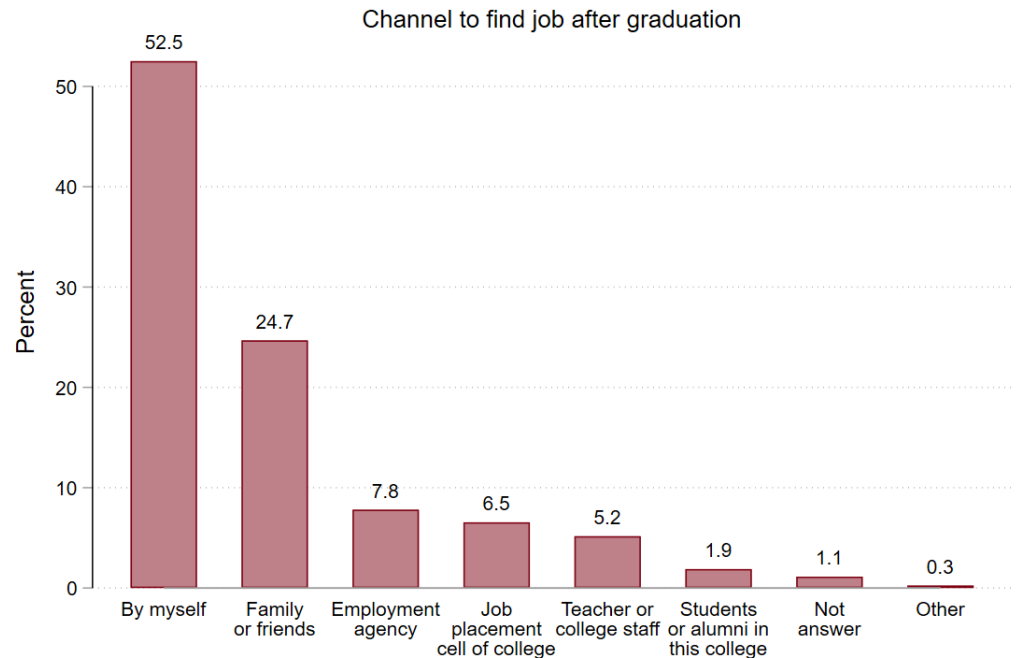
70.2 % — **Ever held a part-time/full-time job**

23.7 % — **Already found a job for after graduation** (Part-time jobs: 4.8%, Full-time jobs: 18.6%)

Most students who have found jobs for after graduation have done so by themselves or through family/friends
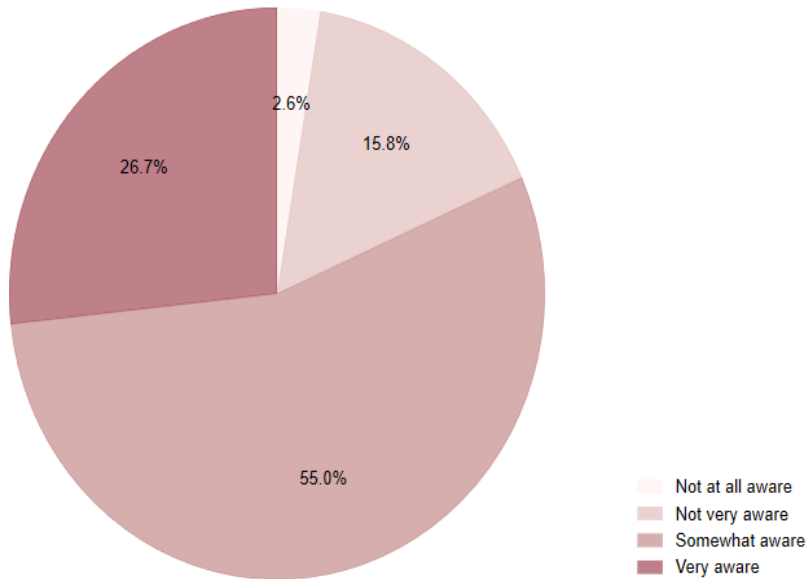
Channel to find job after graduation

Channel	Percent
By myself	52.5
Family or friends	24.7
Employment agency	7.8
Job placement cell of college	6.5
Teacher or college staff	5.2
Students or alumni in this college	1.9
Not answer	1.1
Other	0.3

Key findings

Employment

26.7% are fully aware of the job opportunities related to the major, 55% are somewhat aware

15.5% are very confident to approach employers they do not know when looking for jobs, while 58.7% are somewhat confident

Awareness of job opportunities related to the major

- 2.6%
- 15.8%
- 26.7%
- 55.0%

Not at all aware
Not very aware
Somewhat aware
Very aware

Confidence to approach employers respondents don't know

- 1.4%
- 8.9%
- 15.5%
- 15.5%
- 58.7%

I would never approach an employ
Not at all confident
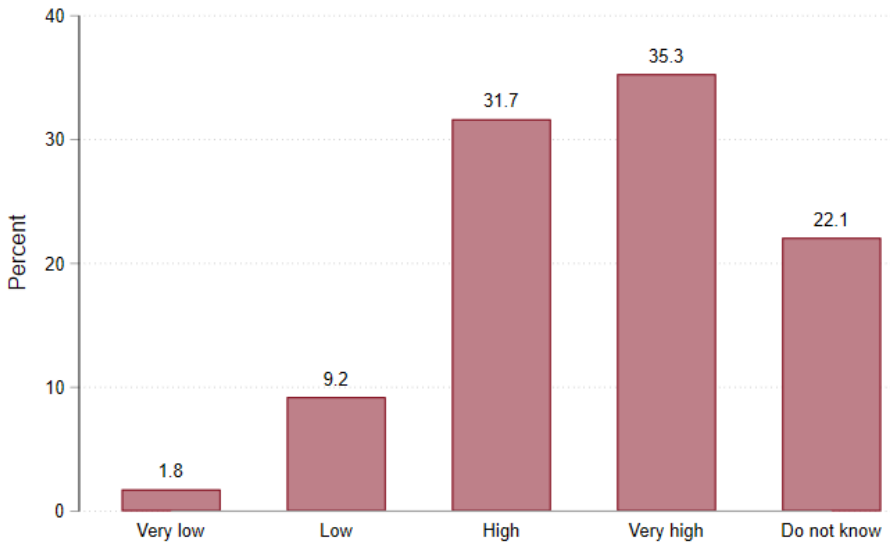Somewhat confident
Very confident
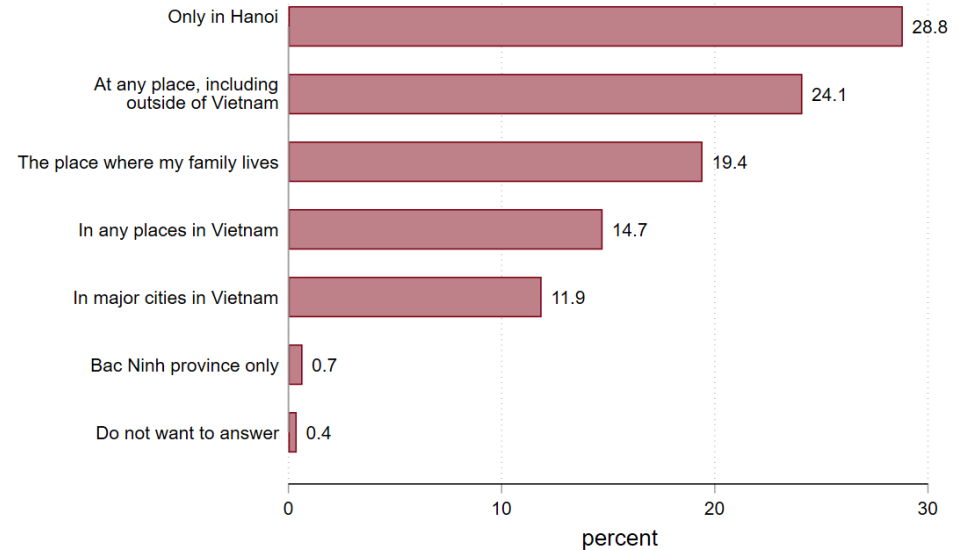Do not want to answer
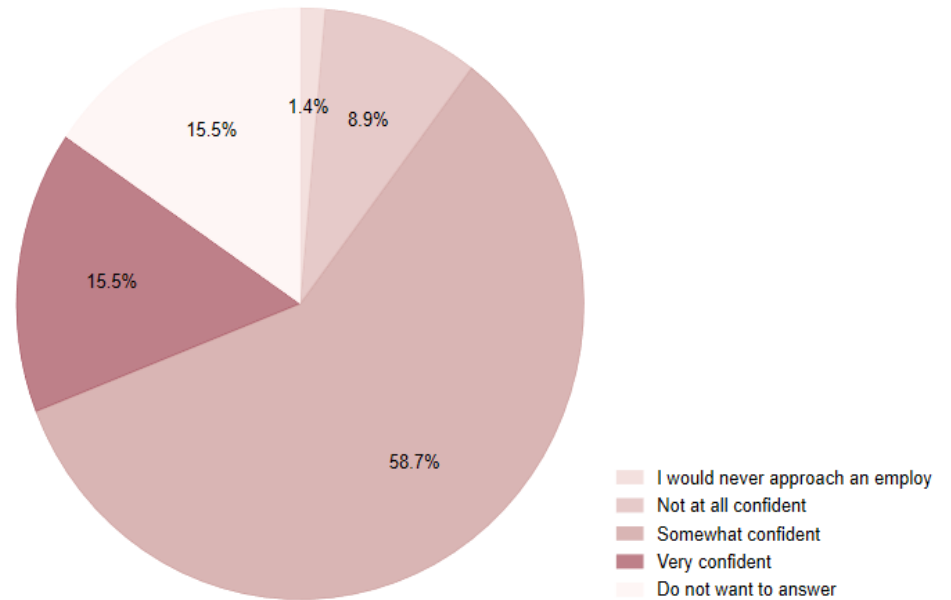
Key findings

Employment

35.3% believe they have a very high chance of getting a job within 6 months after graduation, while 31.7% believe that the chance is high

While 28.8% would accept a job offer in Hanoi only, 24.1% would like to work anywhere, including outside Vietnam

Likelihood that the respondent will have a job within 6 months of graduating

Very low 1.8, Low 9.2, High 31.7, Very high 35.3, Do not know 22.1

Locations that respondents would accept an offer

Only in Hanoi 28.8, At any place, including outside of Vietnam 24.1, The place where my family lives 19.4, In any places in Vietnam 14.7, In major cities in Vietnam 11.9, Bac Ninh province only 0.7, Do not want to answer 0.4
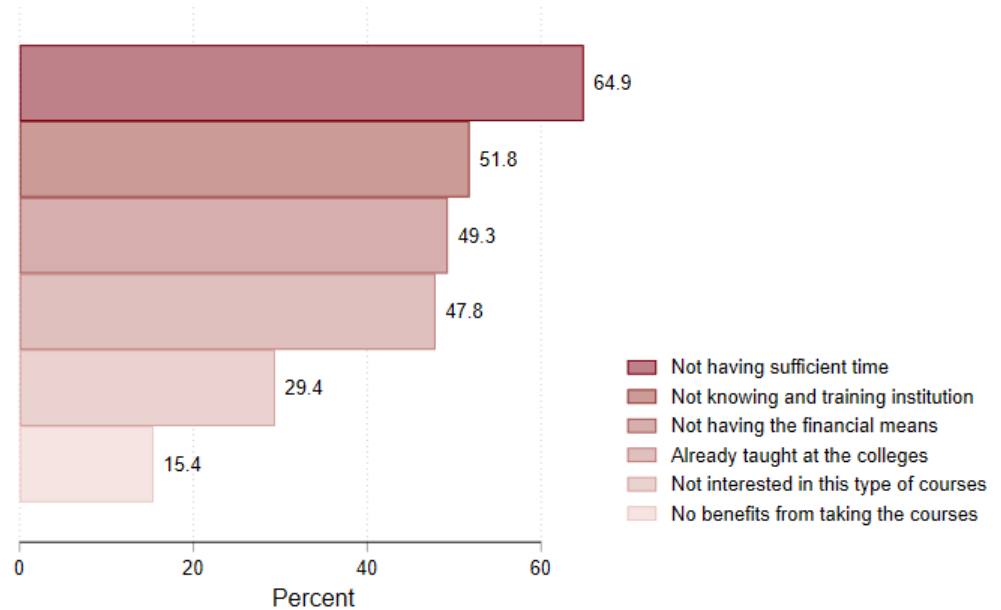
Key findings from baseline survey

Soft-skill course participation

12.6% **Have taken soft-skill courses in addition to the college curriculum**

Not having sufficient time, not knowing any institutions providing these courses, no financial means, and topics already taught at colleges are the most common reasons not to take any soft-skill courses.

Main reasons not to take the soft-skill courses

- 64.9 — Not having sufficient time
- 51.8 — Not knowing and training institution
- 49.3 — Not having the financial means
- 47.8 — Already taught at the colleges
- 29.4 — Not interested in this type of courses
- 15.4 — No benefits from taking the courses

Percent

Timeline

- Sept 2021 – Nov 2021: Baseline survey

- Dec 2021 – May 2022: Training interventions

- April 2022: Training workshop on online data collection

- July 2022 – Sept 2022: Data collection from colleges on student graduation and initial job placements

- Nov 2022: 2-day data analysis training workshop

- March 2023 – June 2023: Follow-up survey with students to understand their labour market experiences and plans.

- Nov 2023 – Dec 2023: Presentation of findings at ILSSA

Project outputs

Academic outputs

- Novel datasets based on 3 waves of data collection

- 2 academic papers to be published in top-ranking peer-reviewed journals

- Presentations at academic conferences and seminars

Policy and dissemination outputs

- 2 policy briefs; columns in international media

- 2 technical training workshops at ILSSA

- 2 workshops at ILSSA to disseminate project findings to relevant stakeholders (vocational colleges, ministries, international organizations, and researchers)

Thank you!
Follow updates at

https://www.econ.ku.dk/derg/current-projects/enhancing-the-effectiveness-of-vocational-education-in-vietnam-eeve/