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## Research Article

### Job Seekers' Awareness towards the Public Employment Services of the Local Government Unit of Tangub City

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the level of awareness among recent graduates of Northern Mindanao State College (NMSC) and Tangub City Global College (TCGC) towards the services offered by the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) of Tangub City. Specifically, the study investigates awareness of referral and placement, labor market information, employment coaching, and job fair programs. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a modified questionnaire administered to 466 recent graduates selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, particularly weighted mean. The findings revealed that while the respondents were aware of PESO's referral and placement, employment coaching and career counseling, and job fair services, their awareness of labor market information was relatively low. These insights highlight the need for PESO to enhance its information dissemination strategies to improve understanding, particularly regarding labor market trends and opportunities.

**Keywords:** *Public Employment Service Office, Job Seekers, Labor Market Information, Referral and Placement, Employment Coaching, Career Counseling*

#### Introduction

Public employment services are typically free and accessible to all job seekers, regardless of their income or employment status. This is seen as a significant advantage, especially for job seekers who may not have access to private employment services. It offers various services, including job search assistance, resume writing workshops, and career counseling. This can be helpful for job seekers who are at different stages of their job search. Job seekers perceive

public employment services as less effective than private ones. This may be due to a lack of awareness of the services offered or to negative experiences with the services in the past. Public employment services are considered impartial, as they are not affiliated with any employer. Some job seekers perceive public employment services as being inefficient and bureaucratic. This may be due to long waiting times or difficulty navigating the system.

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Behrenz et al. (2018) mentioned that public employment services offices help job seekers adopt long-term career perspectives, stimulate them to enhance their competencies, give career guidance, and give workers support to make smooth career transitions, as well as work with employers to ensure they meet their requirements and encourage and support them to provide career opportunities to more disadvantaged individuals. Additionally, Klemmer and Schulrz (2020) stated that public employment services are helpful in an organization, as they provide information on occupations, training institutions, and self-employment opportunities and could attract a broad range of interested job seekers. The Public Employment Service Office (PESO) provides employment opportunities to job seekers through various local and overseas recruitment activities facilitated by local business establishments and overseas employment agencies (Bacheta & Bayoneta, 2021).

Job seekers face several challenges in finding employment, specifically fresh graduates without work experience. Meanwhile, the Local Government Unit of Tangub City has a Public Employment Services Office (PESO) in place that is mandated to offer free, secure, and accessible job opportunities requiring adequate knowledge and skills for job seekers. Several studies have been conducted to assess the implementation and the level of satisfaction of the clients and employees, Bachita and Bayoneta (2021) and Cortez (2023). However, no existing literature has focused on assessing the awareness level among job seekers, especially in Tangub City. With this, the proponents conducted an initial interview with ten fresh graduates living in Tangub City. Unfortunately, seven out of ten answered that they were unaware of services offered by the local government unit of Tangub City. Awareness of these services is crucial for recent graduates as it directly impacts their ability to navigate the job market effectively. Without this knowledge, graduates are essentially trying to find their way in the dark, missing out on valuable resources that could significantly aid their job search.

In this regard, the researchers assessed the fresh graduates' awareness of the public

employment services of the Local Government Unit of Tangub City in the areas of referral and placement, labor market information, employment coaching, and job fair programs. The study's findings were utilized as the basis of decisions and actions for the Local Government Unit to improve its mandate and delivery service. Specifically, it sought an answer to the following questions:

1. What is the level of awareness among fresh graduates towards to the public employment services of the Local Government Unit of Tangub City in terms of:
  - 1.1 referral and placement;
  - 1.2 labor market information;
  - 1.3 employment coaching; and
  - 1.4 job fair program?
2. Which of the public employment services provided by the Local Government of Tangub City are fresh graduates least aware of?

### **Literature Review**

Public Employment Services (PES) are foundational institutions within labor markets designed to offer free and accessible support to all job seekers, irrespective of their background or employment status (Johnston & McGauran, 2021). Birca (2023) added the crucial role of public employment services in connecting employers and the unemployed in the labor market. This will allow employers to source qualified candidates with the help of government agencies, and also allow job seekers to connect with them.

### **Philippine Public Employment Services**

In the Philippines, the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) is being established being mandated as a multi-service facility to provide employment information and assistance to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) clients and constituents of Local Government Units (LGU), where it makes available in one roof the various employment promotion, manpower programs, and services of the DOLE and other government agencies to enable all types of clientele to know more about them and seek specific assistance they require (De Développement, 2017; Bachita & Bayoneta, 2021.)

Cortez (2023), in her study on assessing the level of satisfaction of the employees and

clients of the Public Employment Services Office of Biñan, where the paper cited the following services of the Public Employment Services Office, namely: (1) Referral and Placement (2) Labor Market Information, (3) Employment Coaching, and (4) Job Fair Program.

### **Referral and Placement**

According to the Public Employment Services Office (2020), referral is a process of directing pre-screened job seekers to employers with vacancies matching their qualifications, while placement is the result of a successful referral response to their viewpoint. Referrals provide better information about new hire productivity, with less screening and lower search costs, and increase job stability and wages (Gurtzgen & Pohlan, L. (2024). Aleksandrova (2024) found that companies prefer to use referrals from credible sources as it will be an advantage especially in tough competition for talents which are found to be difficult to find. Furthermore, the study of Gupta (2024) found corporation's recruitment and selection process is influenced by employee referrals (72%) and employment agencies (42%), with high satisfaction in resume screening and clear job descriptions reflecting positively on organizational practices.

### **Labor Market Information**

Labor market information includes data on job vacancies, employment, unemployment, workforce skills, wage trends, and how labor markets adjust to economic changes and technological shifts (Ashenfelter et al., 2022). Suarez et al. (2019) previously emphasized that labor market information is crucial in informing policies and decisions taken by employers and job seekers. Knowledge of the labor market can assist job seekers in making informed plans, choices, and decisions related to business requirements, career planning and preparation, education and training offerings, job search, hiring, and governmental policy and workforce investment strategies (Andersen et al., 2019) However, Karr et al. (2020) highlighted that due to the rapidly evolving labor market, labor market information and career and employment coaching to cater the need for up-to-date knowledge.

### **Employment Coaching**

Beltz (2020) noted that it is beneficial for graduate students interested in immersing themselves in some of the best work being done today in the subject of career development and career counseling, and anyone interested in the fields of employment development, evaluation, and career counseling. Additionally, Stoltz-Loike (2019) cited that one-on-one career counseling and employment coaching on the transition process, financial planning, self-evaluation, career exploration, and job search techniques are typical services for job seekers. In addition to helping job seekers identify skill gaps and offer advice on how to fill them, career counseling and employment coaching help job seekers define reasonable and attainable career goals. (Pope, 2018).

### **Job Fair Program**

According to Daly (2019), a job fair program is a convenient way for job seekers to apply to several companies and to get immediate interviews. Yerevan (2018) previously added that the job fair program enables job seekers to look for employers and gather company and career information. Job seekers with the advantage of having a job fair problem may get an interview and be candidates for existing or future job openings (Rocklin, 2020).

## **Methods**

**Research Design.** The study used a descriptive quantitative research design to assess the awareness among fresh graduates towards the public employment services office of the local government unit of Tangub City. The quantitative research design was considered appropriate for this study as it allows data collection from the sample. It will then be subjected to statistical analysis that allows researchers to arrive at simple statistical descriptions and measures (Smith, 2020).

**Participants of the Study.** The respondents of this study were 466 out of 1179 graduates from A.Y. 2022-2023 at two higher educational institutions in Tangub City, namely, Northern Mindanao State College (NMSCST) and Tangub City Global College (TCGC). The sample size was determined using online

Raosoft sample size calculator with 95% confidence level and margin of error of about 5%. Stratified random sample was also employed, getting the 241 respondents from TCGC and 225 from NMSCST.

**Instrumentation and Data Gathering Process.** The study utilized an adapted questionnaire from the research study of Cortez (2023) entitled "The Public Employment Service Office (PESO) in the City of Biñan: An Assessment". The questionnaire contains questions about job seekers' awareness of public employment services, which include referred and placement, labor market information, employment counseling and career coaching, and job fair programs; each sub-variable has 4 to 5 indicators. Respondents were requested to rate their level of agreement with many items on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree, which was interpreted as Highly Aware, Aware, Less Aware, and Not Aware.

The instrument undergoes content validation from experts and academicians, which is then followed by pilot testing for 30 nonparticipants who share the same characteristics as the actual participants, and the result is then tested for Cronbach Alpha methodology. The outcomes are  $\alpha=0.795$  for Referral and Placement,  $\alpha=0.808$  for Labor Market Information,  $\alpha=0.830$  for Employment Coaching and Career

Counseling, and  $\alpha=0.824$  for Job Fair Program. Thus, the items in the questionnaire are considered "good" and "acceptable" to be conducted to the respondents.

Before the distribution, the researchers asked permission from respective college administrators to conduct the study at the two higher educational institutions in Tangub City, namely, Northern Mindanao State College (NMSC) and Tangub City Global College (TCGC). Then, the respondents requested permission from the respondents who are fresh graduates to allow them to conduct the study. After permission was granted, the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. The researchers clearly directed the respondents to understand the given questions. After they answered the questions, the instruments were retrieved and organized. Then, the data was tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using statistical tools.

**Data Analysis.** The data results were quantitatively analyzed and objectively interpreted using a weighted mean. The weighted mean was used to determine the average responses of the respondents on their level of awareness towards public employment services available in the local government unit of Tangub City. In interpreting the computed mean, the following scoring procedure were used:

Table 1. Scoring Procedure

Numerical Value	Hypothetical Mean Range	Interpretation	Implication
4	3.26 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Aware
3	2.51 – 3.25	Agree	Aware
2	1.76 – 2.50	Disagree	Less Aware
1	1.00 -1.75	Strongly Disagree	Not Aware

**Research Ethics.** The participants' confidentiality was not revealed to anybody. Before the start of the dissemination of the questionnaire, a written inform consent form was given to the respondents. It was also emphasized to the respondents that the data gathered from the questionnaires will only be used for academic purposes. The researchers assured the respondents' information gathered in the instrument would be strictly confidential, and the

anonymity of their identities will be constantly maintained. To ensure the credibility of this study's interpretation, the researchers consulted experts and professionals about the acquired data to ensure that the researchers made the right judgement of the result to provide a good recommendation for this study. As a result, this study was carried out with the utmost dependability and honesty.

## Result and Discussion

*Table 2. Respondents' Response on their Level of Awareness on Public Employment Service in terms of Referral and Replacement*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. The LGU offers a service that provides assistance to applicants until they go on board the job.	2.58	Agree
2. There is a service offered in the LGU that provides a placement process.	2.67	Agree
3. There is an offered service in the LGU that ensures that all needed requirements are available before deployment.	2.60	Agree
4. There is an offered service in the LGU that ensures that the referral time is quick and responsive.	2.46	Disagree
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 2 presents the respondents' responses on their awareness of public employment services regarding referral and placement. The highest mean of 2.67 indicates that the respondents agree that an offered service in the LGU provides a placement process. However, the lowest mean of 2.46 indicates that the respondents disagree that a service is offered in the LGU that ensures that the referral time is quick and responsive. Generally, the grand mean of 2.58 signifies that the respondents agree on the indicators of referral and placement, which implies that their awareness of public employment service in terms of referral and placement is aware.

According to Ali (2020), career choices are usually made without considering referral and

placement process criteria. Such career decision-making concludes with despair and disappointment due to unawareness about the service. Moreover, Germejis and Verschuere (2019) contended that awareness of referral and placement equipping fresh graduates with the facility to be proactive in seeking potential employers or jobs will lead to more effective career self-management and selection processes. Awareness about referral and placement procedures provides information concerning the organizational behavior, culture, and characteristics of the organization, and candidates made judgments from job seekers' perspective of the fairness of the selection and recruitment process (Delery & Doty, 2021).

*Table 3. Respondents' Response on their Level of Awareness on Public Employment Service in terms of Labor Market Information*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. There is an offered service in the LGU that provides timely labor market information to the public.	2.37	Disagree
2. There is an offered service in the LGU that makes access to labor market information easy for the constituents.	2.36	Disagree
3. There is an offered service in the LGU that provides a wide pool of labor market information for the constituents.	2.57	Agree
4. There is an offered service in the LGU that regularly updates available labor market information	2.57	Agree
5. There is an offered service in that provides detailed labor market information	2.57	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>Disagree</b>

Table 3 shows the respondents' response on their level of awareness on public employment service in terms of labor market information. The highest mean of 2.57 depicts that the respondents agree that there is an offered service in the LGU that provides a wide pool of labor market information for the constituents, regularly updates available labor market information, and provides detailed labor market information. However, the lowest mean of 2.36 indicates that the respondents disagree there is an offered service in the LGU that makes access to labor market information easy for the constituents. Generally, the grand mean of 2.49 signifies that the respondents disagree on the indicators of labor market information which implies that their level of awareness on public employment service in terms of labor employment service is less aware.

Altonji and Meghir (2020) stated that study and career choice websites also offer new possibilities for targeted, unobtrusive experiments that gather observational field data, this creates the opportunity to gather data on expectations, which will provide new possibilities to investigate when and how young job seekers learn about different educational and occupational options, and which options they consider and exclude. Additionally, Betts (2020) cited that recent graduate's awareness on increasing labor market demand for graduates from certain fields of study, expectations about future levels of earnings direct students in their field of study choice. Labor market information and role models can help fresh graduates to build career aspirations and avoid generating occupational misconceptions (Damgaard & Nielsen, 2019).

*Table 4. Respondents' Response on their Level of Awareness on Public Employment Service in terms of Employment Coaching*

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. There is a service offered in the LGU that provides coaching and career services, especially to those who are new workers	2.55	Agree
2. There is a service offered in the LGU that regularly/occasionally checks on deployed workers	2.58	Agree
3. There is an offered service in the LGU that provides mechanisms for addressing job mismatch	2.58	Agree
4. LGU provides comprehensive employment guidance to its clients.	2.56	Agree
5. The LGU offers a service with adequate career coaching and counseling staff.	2.56	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 4 presents the respondents' responses on their awareness of public employment services in terms of employment coaching. As can be seen, all indicators are agreed upon by the respondents. The highest mean of 2.58 depicts that the respondents agree that an offered service in the LGU regularly/occasionally checks on deployed workers and provides mechanisms for addressing job mismatch. Generally, the grand mean of 2.56 signifies that the respondents agree on the indicators of employment coaching, which further implies that their level of awareness on public employment service in terms of employment coaching is aware.

The result relates to Abbas (2021) findings that employment coaching are closely interdependent insofar as one's characteristics, desires, and efforts, in addition to one's personal view of the world being expressed through the psychological concept known as locus of control. Moreover, Smith (2022) stated that recent college graduates should also be aware of specific career-related expectations that influence their communication strategies to search for jobs and manage their expectations. This area is under-studied in employment coaching and career services counseling. Employment coaching and career counseling are relevant; they increase young job seekers' awareness of

the varied natures of different jobs and help identify the jobs most suitable for the individual student, which is considered even more

important concerning the social environments associated with various careers. (Millosi, 2019).

*Table 5. Respondents' Response on their Level of Awareness in Public Employment Service in terms of Job Fair Program*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. The LGU offers a service that provides information about the job fair program.	2.73	Agree
2. The LGU offers a service that helps applicants meet potential employers.	2.73	Agree
3. There is a service offered in the LGU that matches the job to the qualifications of applicants.	2.70	Agree
4. The LGU offers a service that reduces the applicants' time, cost, and effort.	2.73	Agree
5. LGU offers a service that helps applicants get hired immediately.	2.16	Disagree
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 5 presents the respondents' responses on their awareness of public employment services regarding job fair programs. The highest mean of 2.73 depicts that the respondents agree that there is an offered service in the LGU that provides information about the job fair program, helps the applicants to meet potential employers, and reduces the time, cost, and effort on the part of the applicants. However, the lowest mean of 2.16 indicates that the respondents disagree that there is an offered service in the LGU that helps the applicants get hired immediately. Generally, the grand mean of 2.61 signifies that the respondents agree on the indicators of the job fair program, which further implies that their awareness of the public employment service in terms of the job fair program is limited.

According to Devlin et al. (2019), being aware of to job fair program is a great deal, as meeting representatives of companies and getting access to a series of services, such as databases, counseling on employment or human resource management, information on training offers, and first and foremost information on job vacancies. Furthermore, Enochsson (2020) noted that a job fair program allows a great deal of information exchange between job seekers and potential employers in one place: awareness of this benefits both sides by significantly reducing the cost of both job search and recruitment. In addition, the job fair program enables relevant information on both sides to be gathered if both sides are aware of how to counter each other (God Thorpe, 2019).

*Table 6. Summary of Respondents' Response to Their Level of Awareness of Public Employment Services*

Factors	Grand Mean	%	Interpretation
Referral and Placement	2.58	64.5%	Aware
Labor Market Information	2.49	62.25%	Less Aware
Employment Coaching	2.56	64%	Aware
Job Fair Program	2.61	65.25%	Aware

Table 7 indicates the summary of respondents' responses on their level of awareness of public employment services. Based on the table projected above, labor market

information is the least aware among the services of the public employment service that got the lowest grand mean, which signifies that labor market information has the least

awareness among the fresh graduates towards public employment services in the Local Government of Tangub City.

According to Koettl and Tamayo (2021), being aware of labor market information is used to help workers enter the labor market, facilitate labor market adjustments, and cushion the impact of economic changes, they also typically provide labor market information, offer job search assistance and placement services, administer unemployment insurance benefits, and manage various labor market programs. In addition, Hansen et al. (2020) noted that labor market information was mainly concerned with job-broking, that is, with arranging for job seekers to be aware and to obtain jobs and employers to fill vacancies. However, some also became involved in new systems of unemployment insurance. Lack of information on job opportunities without labor market information tools and intermediary services may cause a labor supply and demand mismatch, even if both are, in theory, available in the labor market (Rihova, 2022).

## Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal varying levels of awareness among recent graduates regarding the Public Employment Services offered by the Local Government Unit of Tangub City. Among the four service categories examined, job fair programs demonstrated the highest awareness level with a mean score of 2.61 (65.25% awareness rate), followed by referral and placement services (mean = 2.58, 64.5% awareness rate) and employment coaching (mean = 2.56, 64% awareness rate), all falling within the "Aware" category.

However, a significant gap was identified in labor market information services, which recorded the lowest mean score of 2.49 (62.25% awareness rate), categorizing it as "Less Aware" and representing the least understood service among fresh graduates. Notably, only 36-37% of respondents agreed that labor market information was timely and easily accessible through LGU services.

This disparity in awareness levels indicates that while the Local Government Unit of Tangub City has successfully communicated and engaged with its constituents regarding most

employment services, critical improvements are needed in disseminating labor market information. The under-utilization of this essential service suggests that graduates may be making career decisions without access to comprehensive data on job vacancies, employment trends, wage information, and market dynamics. Given that labor market information serves as a foundational tool for informed career planning and job search strategies, this awareness gap represents a significant barrier to effective employment outcomes for recent graduates.

The study's findings suggested the urgent need for PESO to implement comprehensive information dissemination strategies through multiple channels. Specific recommendations include: (1) establishing a strong digital presence through social media platforms, mobile applications, and an interactive website featuring real-time labor market data and job matching tools; (2) strengthening campus engagement by embedding PESO representatives in university career centers, conducting regular seminars during pre-graduation periods, and integrating employment services awareness into internship programs; (3) developing strategic partnerships with educational institutions to create alumni networks that facilitate ongoing career support and information sharing; (4) implementing targeted outreach through local radio advertisements, printed materials in high-traffic areas, and community bulletin boards; and (5) creating user-friendly labor market information dashboards that provide accessible, regularly updated data on employment trends, wage information, and skill demands. These multi-faceted approaches will ensure that all employment services, particularly labor market information, become well-understood and readily accessible resources for job seekers.

## Acknowledgement

These should be included at the end of the text and not in footnotes. Personal acknowledgements should precede those of institutions or agencies.

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