

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS: INVESTIGATION INTO
A VET MODEL FOR PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACER	Australian Centre for Educational Research
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADTP	Australasian Digital Theses Program
ALP	Australian Labour Party
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ASI	Adelaide Scholarship International
CBT	Competency-based Training
CODE	College of Distance Education
CTL	Contextual teaching and learning
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
EBC	Education Broadcasting Corporation
GPA	Grade Point Average
HOD	Heads of Department
HSC	High School Certificate
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LSAY	Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NATTAB	National Trade and Testing Board
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NDE	National Department of Education
NRQ	Nationally Recognised Qualification
OECD	Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development
PBL	Problem-Based Learning
PETT	Pre-Employment Technical Training
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGQF	PNG Qualifications Framework
RTO	Registered training organisation
SM	Subject Masters
SSCEP	Secondary Schools Community Extension Project
TAFE	Technical and further education
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UAI	Universities Admission Index
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization
UNESCO-UNEVOC	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP PNG	United Nations Development Program, Papua New Guinea
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETiS	VET in schools

ABSTRACT

Vocational education and training (VET) was introduced into the secondary school curriculum in many developed countries because of its economic and social benefits. Papua New Guinea (PNG), a developing nation, appeared to overlook VET as an important tool for economic and social development since independence in 1975. Its secondary schools have provided only an academic pathway for the top quarter of its students. Thousands of secondary school students become school leavers at Grade 10 and 12 levels, without having VET knowledge and employability skills/attributes. This student transition problem negatively impacted on PNG society through high level youth unemployment and unrest. The purpose of this study was to investigate and determine the characteristics of a VET program model at the secondary school level which might address the current student transition problem in PNG. The following question was used to direct this research: How can a VET model address and minimise the current student transition problem at the secondary school level in Papua New Guinea? This study applied the positivist (qualitative) and descriptive (quantitative) mixed methodology. The use of mixed/triangulation methods was considered important because one data collection form would supply strengths to offset the possible weaknesses of the others. The data was gathered using applied discourse/text analysis, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews from purposely selected PNG stakeholders: students, teachers, policy-makers/school principals and business/industry personnel. The results illustrated how VET in PNG was given little priority at the policy level. Most stakeholders thought that academic subjects would assure a better future than VET subjects. Although VET subjects and employability skills and attributes were considered to have some importance by most stakeholders, almost always they expressed some reservations. Most students and teachers thought that VET subjects were less valuable than academic subjects. Similarly, most business/industry personnel expressed that postgraduate students and other tertiary graduates possessed better skills for work than the secondary school graduates. This was

because VET programs were restricted to post-secondary schools or TVET colleges. Most stakeholders failed to realise that the academic subjects could be studied only by a minority students. Teachers and school principals were trying their best to manage their schools within their means. Most did not have the required teaching and learning facilities to implement the new VET subjects at secondary level. These reforms were put in jeopardy because of the lack of resources, especially classroom space, training facilities and qualified VET teachers. Although the stakeholders were positive about the importance of VET, there was little evidence of actual participation in VET programs at the secondary school level. The results illustrated a need to embrace both VET and general academic subjects as an integral part of secondary school level in PNG. Therefore, the study concluded that PNG needs to consider and implement an integrated academic/VET program model at the secondary school level. This integrated academic/VET model would enhance many students' pathways for further education and training, employment and improvement of life in PNG.

DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Daniel Kaki Leke and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library catalogue, the Australasian Digital Theses Program (ADTP) and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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