

TVET in Malaysia: Perceptions vs Reality

A nationwide survey to understand how the public, students, graduates, and employers view Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Malaysia.



Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The term **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** was officiated at the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education in 1999 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The Congress recommended the usage of the term “in recognition of the combined process of education and training, and of the common objective of employment as their immediate goal.” ([UNESCO,1999](#))

Due to its critical role in equipping individuals with practical skills and knowledge necessary for the workforce, TVET is gaining increasing national importance, underscored by recent developments such as the launch of the National TVET Policy 2030¹ and the Advanced TVET 2030 initiative² under the Malaysian Technical University Network (MTUN). This marks a significant shift in positioning TVET as a full-fledged academic and professional pathway, with Masters and Doctorate programmes to be introduced in the future.

There has been a positive upsurge in TVET enrolments in Malaysia with 423,267 registered participants in 1,398 institutions in 2024 (Asia Education Review, 2025). To ensure a future-ready, high-skilled and relevant workforce which contributes to economic development in Malaysia, it is crucial to understand the barriers hindering TVET's popularity and momentum. This understanding will help those who seek to better inform the public, especially students and their families, about how to support this national aspiration. This report aims to provide insights to inform the work of educators, training institutions, employers, policymakers and other stakeholders involved in the education sector.

Current TVET Landscape in Malaysia



E&E Vacancy Rates

Vacancies in Electrical & Electronics (E&E) fields exceeded 5% in 2024.



Low Youth Participation

Only 4.3% of Malaysian youth (aged 15–24) enrolled in technical or vocational programmes (UNESCO UIS SDG, 2024).



Talent Gaps in Engineering

Malaysia needs 50,000 E&E engineers annually, but local universities produce only 5,000 graduates (MITI, 2024).



High Employability

TVET graduate employability rose from 65.5% (2010) to 94.0% (2023), (MOHE, 2024).



High Demand for Semi-Skilled Workers

55.9% of job vacancies in 2024 were for semi-skilled roles (DOSM, 2024).



Jobs Mismatch (MOHE, 2024)

- 70% of graduates are mismatched (vertical or horizontal).
- 43% are not working in their trained field.

1 [Dasar TVET Negara](#)

2 [Gamechanger for TVET](#)

Objectives of the Survey

This survey serves to understand three key groups:

1



Youth & General Public

To explore the perceptions of students and the general public aged 16 and above towards TVET in order to better understand the factors influencing educational and career choices.

2



Current and Graduated TVET Students

To investigate the actual experiences of current and graduated TVET students, the decisions behind their educational journeys and the relevance of their training to employers.

3



Employers

To understand the perception of employers towards the quality and relevance of TVET graduates and insights into employment practices.

Survey Design and Demographics

Definitions and Concepts

This survey adopted the broad definition of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as the component of education systems which prepares individuals for the world of work through various learning approaches which focus on practical skills development and workplace relevance. In Malaysia, all TVET qualifications must align with the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) Second Edition (2024).

This survey utilised the following context in relation to TVET pathways in Malaysia:

 TVET Qualification Levels	 Types of Institutions Issuing TVET Qualifications	 TVET Courses & Qualifications
Certificate	College	
Diploma	Polytechnic	
Advanced Diploma	Skills training institute	Qualifications which emphasise technical and vocational knowledge and industry occupational standards.
Graduate Certificate		
Graduate Diploma		
Bachelor's Degree	University	

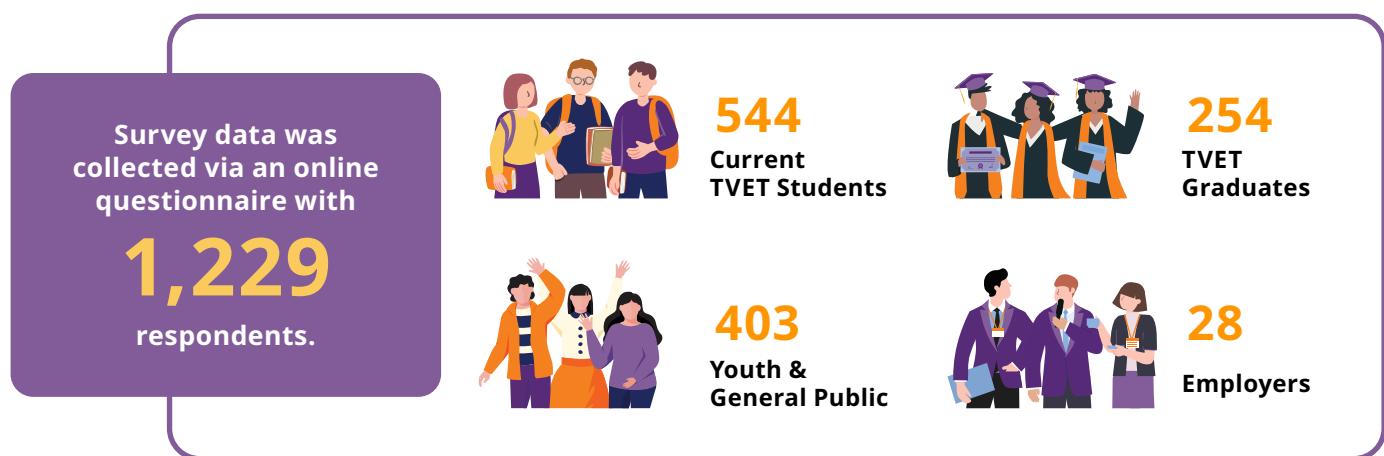
The survey sought to gain insights into three components:



In order to generate these insights, an online questionnaire was utilised to gather responses from the youth and the general public, which included respondents aged 16 and above who are not involved in the TVET sector, students currently studying for a TVET qualification, recent TVET graduates and employers. The questionnaire included a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions, allowing for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

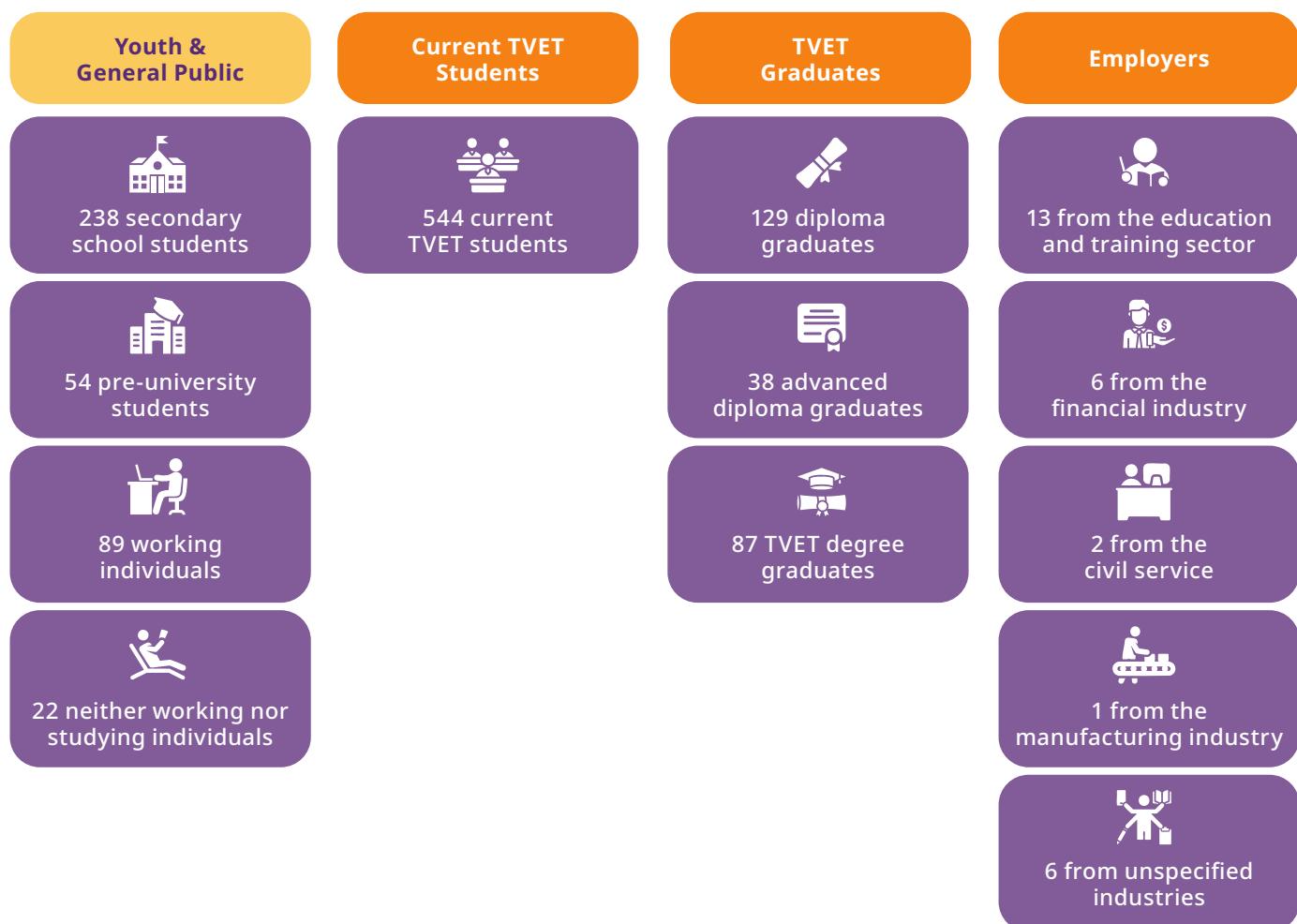
The cut-off date for the data in this report was 11 November 2024.

Demographic Data



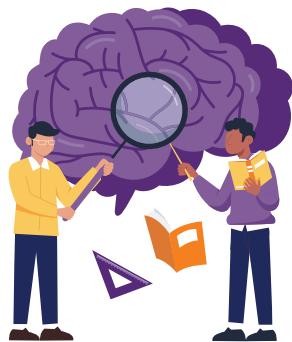
Responses were received from all states and federal territories across Malaysia, with Selangor representing just over 50% of the responses from current and graduated TVET students.

The current and graduated TVET students were from 13 different course types with the largest group (67%) from engineering and manufacturing courses and the next two largest groups from ICT (15%) and Creative (7%) courses.



Key Findings

#1



TVET Knowledge Levels

The majority of respondents demonstrate low levels of TVET knowledge.

The majority of the respondents have limited knowledge of TVET qualification levels, institutions that offer TVET qualifications and the various TVET courses and qualifications available.

#2



Perception of TVET Qualifications

The majority of youth, TVET students and graduates perceive TVET as a practical and employment-focused pathway.

The majority of TVET students and graduates chose TVET to pursue their personal and career goals.

#3



Employability of TVET Graduates

The majority of respondents who have more experience of TVET have more positive perceptions of the employability of TVET graduates.

The main reason stated by employers who have no demand for TVET graduates is due to company policies.

SECTION 1

Awareness of TVET



TVET knowledge levels were measured based on the respondents knowledge of the following:

TVET Qualification

Levels: Respondents were asked to identify TVET qualification levels based on 8 options presented to them.

TVET Institutions:

Respondents were asked to identify which institutions offer TVET courses and qualifications based on 5 options presented to them.

TVET Courses and

Qualifications: Respondents were asked to identify **5 or more TVET courses** based on 19 options presented to them.

Indicators of overall TVET Knowledge Level:

- Identified 0-1 answers correctly
- Answered 2 answers correctly
- Answered 3 answers correctly

- = low TVET knowledge
- = medium TVET knowledge
- = high TVET knowledge

Overall, an average of 90% of the total respondents have limited knowledge of TVET.

Further breakdown of each demographic group for each indicator is shown below.

TVET Qualifications Level

96%

of all respondents are **NOT** aware of the full range of TVET qualification levels available.

- 92% - Youth & General Public
- 98% - TVET students
- 93% - TVET graduates
- 100% - Employers

Diving Deeper...

87.7%

of current TVET students do not know that TVET offers qualifications up to degree level

All respondents are under the impression that TVET only offers qualifications up to:

23%	Certificate
28%	Diploma
17%	Advanced Diploma
15%	Bachelor's Degree
5%	Postgraduate Diploma
4%	Master's Degree
9%	PHD



TVET Institutions

88%

of all respondents are **NOT** aware of the full range of institutions that offer TVET courses.

Breakdown of each key group NOT aware of institutions that offer TVET courses

 **86%**
Youth & General Public

 **94%**
TVET students

 **79%**
TVET graduates

 **64%**
Employers

TVET Courses & Qualifications

52%

of all respondents are **NOT** able to identify 5 or more TVET courses.

Courses least identified as TVET by respondents

1%
Journalism



3%
Accountancy



3%
Sport science



3%
Marketing



4%
Nursing



The survey also gathered data on how youth & general public, current & graduated TVET students receive their information on TVET.

Respondents were asked to select all sources of information from the following list:



Parents



School counsellors



Social media platforms
(IG, TikTok, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, etc)



Friends



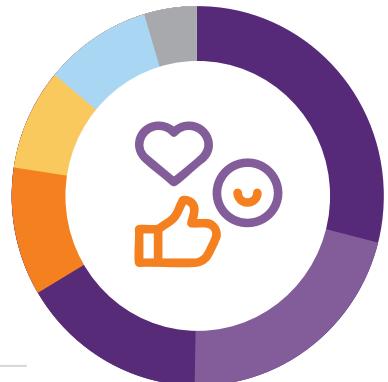
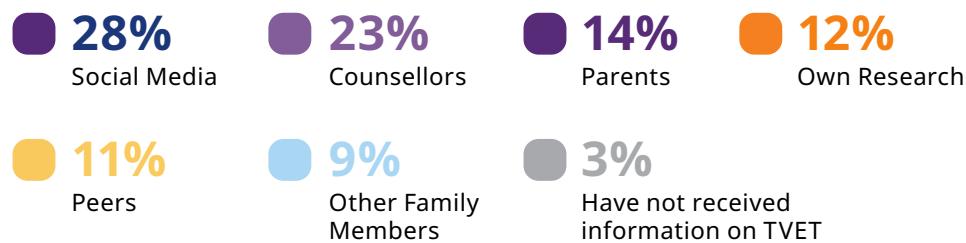
Own research



Have not come across any information about TVET

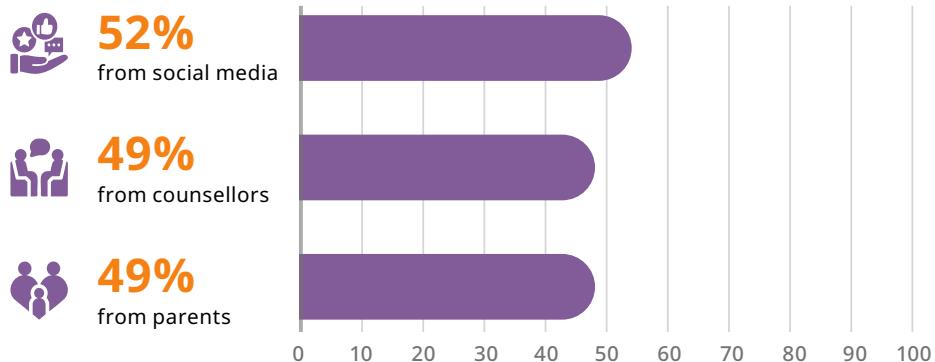
Social media is the preferred method of receiving information on TVET.

Although parents and counsellors remain a common source of information, social media plays the most significant role (28%) in increasing youth and the general public's knowledge of TVET.



The level of TVET knowledge is highest amongst social media users.

Knowledge levels aligned to source of information:



⚠
This suggests that social media has the potential to shape youths' & the general public's perception of TVET, especially when the content is informative and engaging.



SECTION 2

Factors Influencing Decision Making



All respondents were asked to select the factors that influence their decision making process and their perceptions towards TVET qualifications.

They were asked to state:

Current & graduated TVET students: Why they chose the TVET pathway based on the 8 options presented to them, or to state any unlisted options.

Youth: Why they would not choose a TVET pathway based on a choice of 8 reasons provided or to state any unlisted options.

Youth, current and graduated TVET students: Self and parents' perception towards TVET qualifications.

Factors Influencing the Decision to Pursue TVET: Current & Graduated TVET Students

66%

37%
Interest

29%
Employability

of current & graduated TVET students chose TVET because of **Personal Interests** and **Career Goals**

19% chose TVET because of Social Influence

15% chose TVET because of Accessibility



19% chose TVET because of Social Influence:

9%
Encouraged by others

8%
Encouraged by parents

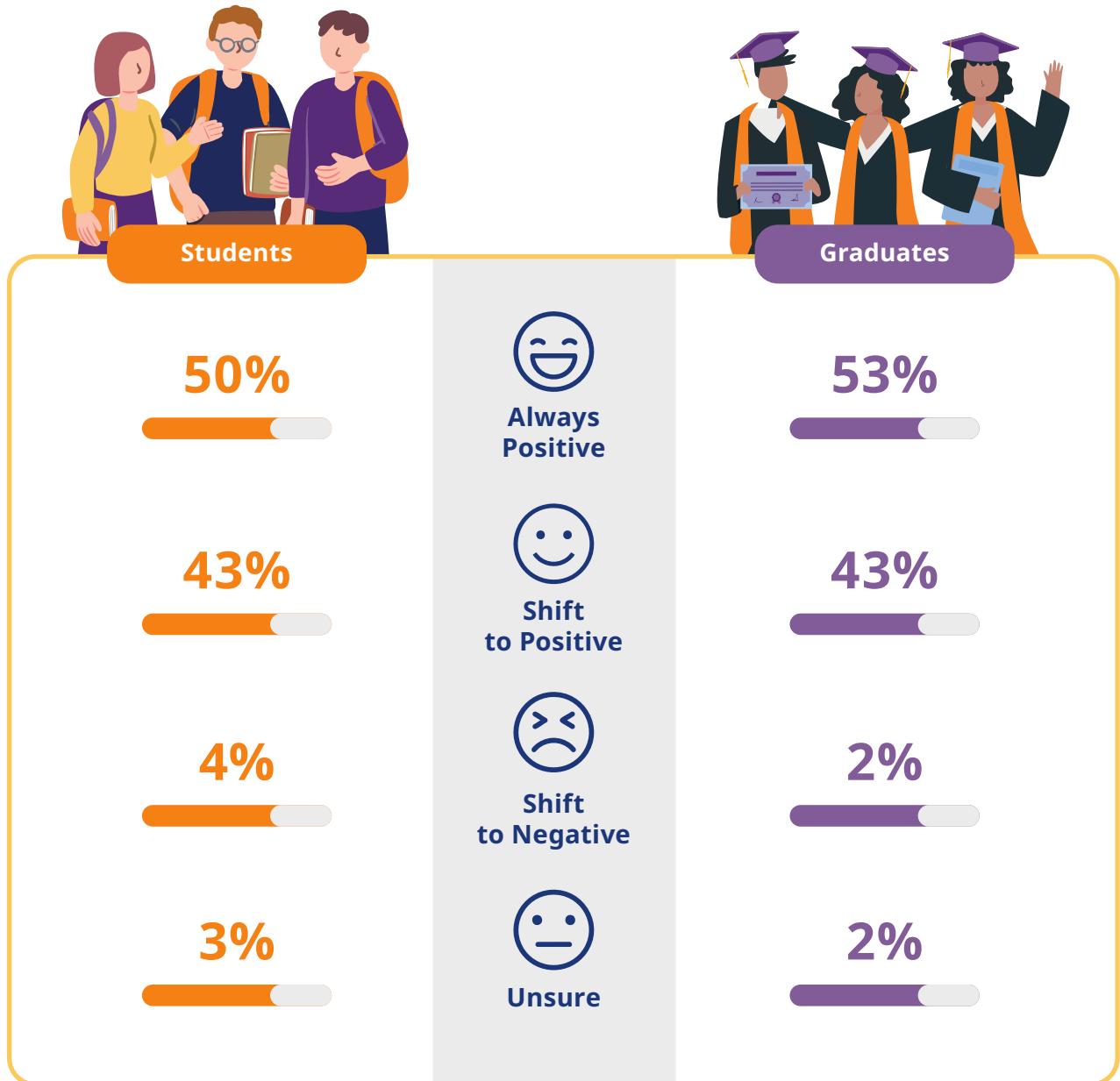
2%
Influenced by friends

15% chose TVET because of Accessibility:

7% - Affordability
6% - Placement only offered by TVET institutions

2%
Proximity to home

TVET graduates report more positive perceptions of their qualifications compared to current TVET students.



Though some may initially be unsure about choosing a TVET pathway, a significant positive shift in perception is observed—with an average of 43% reporting improved views during the educational experience. Only a small minority experienced a negative shift, suggesting that undertaking a TVET experience tends to strengthen confidence in its value.

TVET qualifications are largely perceived as practical and employment-focused by youths

#1



23%

believe that TVET offers hands-on learning and job-specific skills

#2



22%

believe that TVET provides a faster route into the workforce

#3



17%

believe that TVET allows both academic and career advancement

Additional Perceived Benefits of TVET

#4



14%

High demand for TVET-qualified graduates

#6



8%

TVET suits my academic performance in school

#5



10%

TVET courses are more affordable than other study options

#7



5%

Less academic focus makes TVET more appealing



*1% of respondents think that TVET qualifications are not useful at all

Although 17% of youth say they would definitely choose TVET qualifications, others are held back by the following barriers:

#1



25%

lack family support

#2



16%

lack interest in TVET

#3



15%

lack financial means

Additional Barriers

#4



13%

Do not understand the benefits of TVET qualifications

#7



4%

Perceived lack of career opportunities

#5



8%

Perceived as not of similar value to other qualifications

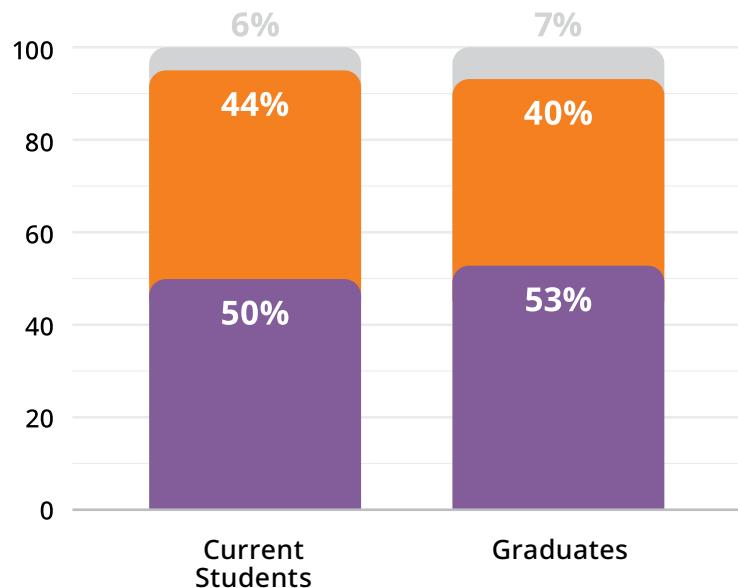
#8



3%

Perceived lack of value

Parental perceptions of TVET are shaped by their children's experiences within the programme.



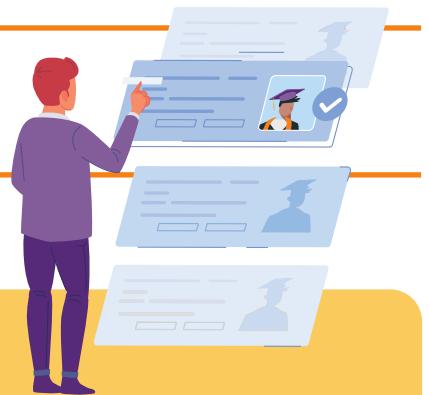
Parental perceptions of TVET **shift positively** through their children's experiences, with over 40% of both current and graduated students' parents reporting a change from negative to positive.

█ Shift to Positive █ Always Positive
█ Remain Negative/Unsure



SECTION 3

Employers and Employability



This survey identified employers' perception of TVET graduates and their employability through these questions:

#1

What is the demand for Malaysian Certificate or Diploma level TVET graduates in your company?

#2

Can the company fulfil its demand for Malaysian Certificate or Diploma level TVET graduates ?

#3

What is the level of alignment of TVET graduates' skills with workforce needs?

The employability rate of graduates from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes has now reached an average of 94.5%, according to Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi. This is accompanied by a rise in student enrolment, which increased from 407,000 to 423,000 in 2024, indicating growing interest in TVET pathways (Selangor Journal, 2025).

This section presents findings that offer insights into employers' perspectives, including those from the education and training sectors, on the value of TVET qualifications and the demand for TVET graduates.

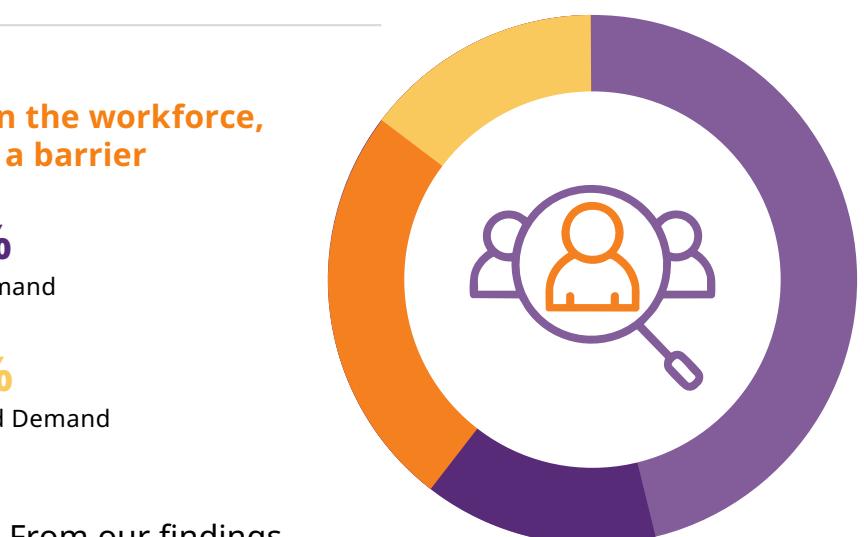
TVET graduates are in demand in the workforce, where company policies are not a barrier

42%
High Demand

15%
No Demand

24%
Medium Demand

19%
Limited Demand



From our findings,

66% of employers have a *medium to high* demand for TVET graduates

in their organisation, whereas only 16% of employers have no demand for TVET graduates.



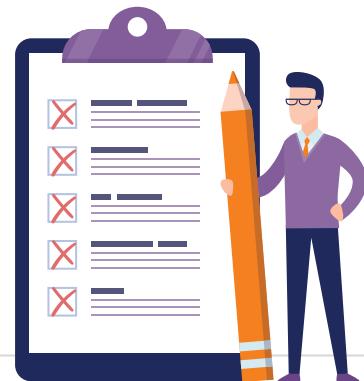
24%

of employers who hire TVET graduates believe that there is a need for more TVET graduates in the market.

Company policies and preferences for degree holders are the main reasons stated for employers not hiring TVET graduates.

- #1  **33%** Company Policies
- #2  **33%** Degree holders are able to learn new skills quickly
- #3  **17%** Insufficient understanding about TVET qualifications
- #4  **17%** Only degree holders possess the necessary technical skills for the job

Company (internal) policy (33%) and unverified perceptions that non-degree TVET graduates have lower ability to learn new skills (33%) may hinder the hiring of adequately skilled TVET graduates.



The next section compares the perceptions of TVET among three key demographics; Youth & the general public, current TVET students, and TVET graduates, against employers within the working sector.

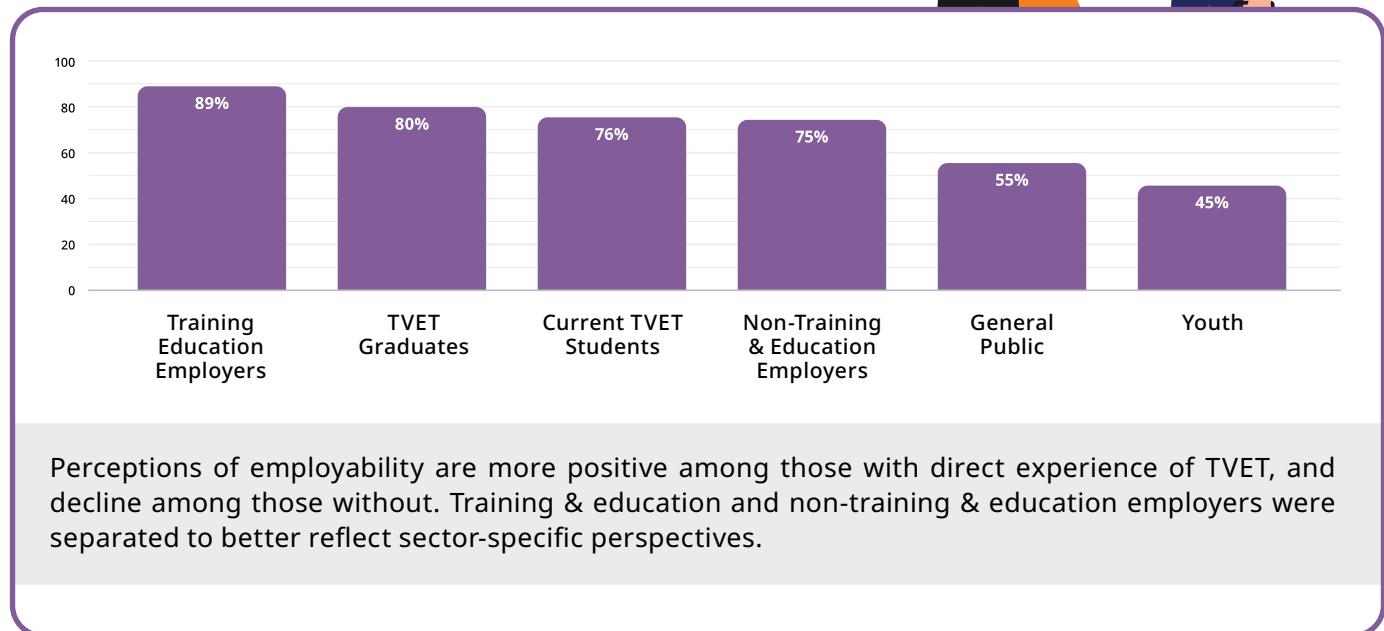
For the purpose of this analysis, employers are classified into two categories:

Training & Education Employers:
Those working within the education and training sector (e.g. teachers, trainers, lecturers).

Non-Training & Education Employers:
Those representing industries and organisations outside the education sector



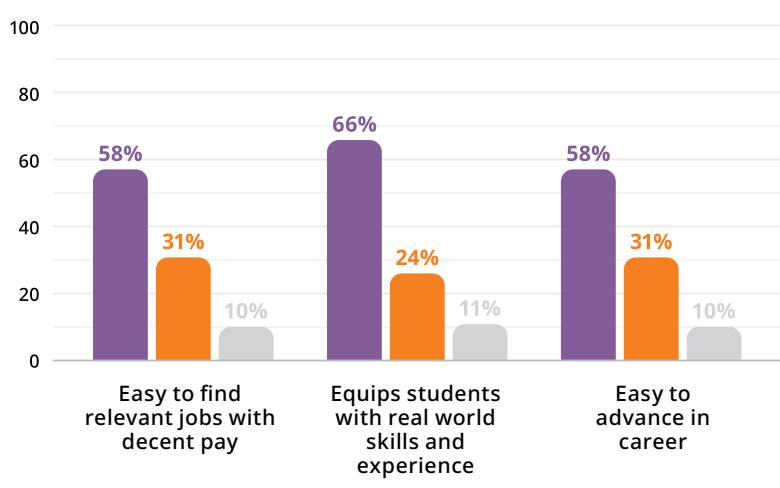
Current TVET students & graduates view their qualifications positively, and employers share this perception.



The perception of TVET graduates' employability tends to correlate with the level of familiarity or direct experience respondents have with the system. Those with closer exposure to TVET, such as current students, graduates and employers who have hired TVET talent tend to hold more positive views, particularly in terms of the relevance of skills to the job market.

A significant majority of current TVET students (76%) and graduates (80%) believe that employers regard TVET qualifications as equal to or better than other academic credentials. Similarly, 82% of employers who have previously hired TVET graduates report that these individuals possess at least some to most of the essential skills and knowledge needed for their roles.

In contrast, among the youth and general public, positive perception is more moderate, with 61% agreeing that TVET offers relevant job opportunities, competitive pay, practical workplace skills, and viable career pathways.



61%

of youth and the general public view TVET positively for its job relevance, competitive pay, practical skills, and career advancement opportunities.

█ Agree █ Neutral
█ Disagree

Diving Deeper...



45%

of youth have a positive perception of TVET across the 3 indicators

but...

Only

35%

of them would choose to pursue a TVET pathway

Mismatch of expectations in the TVET industry between Training & Education Employers vs Non-Training & Education Employers

We asked employers what changes they would like to see in the TVET sector over the next five years. While 14% expressed the need for more certificate and diploma-level TVET graduates, the most frequent response was relevancy to industry needs. There was a notable disparity between the responses of employers from the education & training sector and those from non-training & education sectors, indicating differing priorities and expectations for the future of TVET.



Employers' Suggestions For Improvements In The TVET Sector



25%

of employers want TVET courses to better align with industry needs.

37% - Education & Training Sector
63% - Non-Education & Training Sector



23%

of employers want the quality of graduates to improve

48% - Education & Training Sector
52% - Non-Education & Training Sector



17%

of employers think that higher pay should be considered.

68% - Education & Training Sector
32% - Non-Education & Training Sector



14%

of employers think that more apprenticeships should be offered

59% - Education & Training Sector
41% - Non-Education & Training Sector

* The remaining 21% say that more TVET graduates are needed (14%) and no changes are required (7%)



Employer responses likely reflect individual perceptions on whether the responsibility for attracting the youth to TVET and producing work-ready graduates lies more on the (educational) institutions or employers themselves.



Key Takeaways



Experience of TVET positively impacts perceptions

The findings revealed a notable trend: individuals with prior experience as TVET educators, students, or employers of TVET graduates held a significantly more positive view of TVET education's value. This positive shift occurred even if their initial perceptions were negative. To address the persistent perception of TVET as a less valuable educational path, strategies such as utilising current or former students and parents as ambassadors, organising campus visits, and offering taster sessions could prove effective.

A limited awareness of TVET education may be hampering its image

Despite their vocational nature, subjects like accounting, journalism, and nursing are often not identified as TVET, possibly due to their higher perceived status compared to professions typically seen as more 'manual'. Highlighting such qualifications could enhance the TVET brand image, accelerating the increased adoption it is currently enjoying.



Return on investment of a TVET education is high

Findings reveal a strong awareness of the high employability rates among TVET diploma graduates, indicating a favorable return on investment. Substantial market demand for these graduates suggests promising salary prospects, particularly for those who choose in-demand specialisations. Additionally, due to their specialised skills, TVET graduates are well-positioned to pursue entrepreneurship opportunities, which may lead to increased earning potential.



Social influence plays a big role in the chosen education pathway

Given that over a quarter of young respondents cited social media as a key source of information about TVET, there's a clear opportunity to leverage digital platforms. By collaborating with influencers, educators, and industry leaders, we can enhance the quality, accuracy, and visibility of TVET content, thereby increasing public awareness.

Companies may be missing a golden opportunity to shape skilled graduates

There is some indication that company policies may be impeding the recruitment of Diploma and Certificate-level graduates. Given the evolving nature of businesses and increasing demand for technical expertise, it may be beneficial to reassess graduate programmes to better cultivate and direct future talent toward areas of greatest need.



Closer industry-academic ties is a win-win

To better prepare students for the workforce, closer collaboration between educators and employers is essential. While positive steps have been made in aligning TVET curricula with occupational standards, issues with skills and quality gaps among graduates persist. Collaborations that benefit all parties can close these gaps by improving curricula and offering access to contemporary training equipment, thereby producing graduates who are better prepared for the workforce.

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