

Need for Planning Secondary Education to Develop Vocational-Oriented Competencies to match future World of work

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Education and development are inter-related, because the development of human resources contributes to the development of that country. Education must prepare students for the future world of work. According to Hughes and Krochler (2005) secondary education should focus on developing vocational oriented competencies.

The present study focused on the identification of (1) perceptions of students, teachers and parents regarding current secondary education, (2) vocational oriented competencies expected by employers from potential employees ,(3) the relationship between the secondary education curriculum and the world of work, (4) strategies for developing vocational oriented competencies in students so as to equip them for the world of work of the future and (5) recommendations to gear secondary education to the world of work.

The survey method was used for this study. The sample used was based on 20, 1AB and 1C schools in the Kandy district. From those schools, 500 students, 200 parents and 200 teachers were selected according to the random sampling method. In addition, 60 employers and 50 key persons selected according to the purposive sampling method were also included in the sample. For collection of data, questionnaires and interview schedules were used as instruments. Data analysis was carried out using both qualitative and quantitative methods. According to the results of the data analysis it was evident that the perceptions regarding secondary education were positive. The interviews helped to identify 18 vocational oriented competencies considered as important by the employers.

The study enabled the researcher to identify several measures that could be implemented for the development of vocational oriented skills which could be incorporated in a programme of action. The sample expressed the need to identify new trends through the study of the world of work and innovation education in parallel. Establishment of training institutions at zonal level for the development of vocational oriented competencies, institution of a quality structure in

curriculum development committees, training teachers for the development of vocational oriented competencies, subjecting vocational oriented competencies for evaluation at national examinations, making participation in co-curricular activities compulsory, formalization of vocational guidance programmes and bringing about a change in societal attitudes were also highlighted.

Key words: Competencies, Secondary Education, Vocational-Oriented, World of Work

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